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THE

WORKS

OF

PRESIDENT EDWARDS,

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOL. V.

CONTAINING,

I. A HISTORY OF THE WORK OF REDEMPTION.

II. MEN ARE NATURALLY GOD'S ENEMIES.

III. THE WISDOM OF GOD DISPLAYED IN THE WAY OF SALVATION.

IV. CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE; OR, THE IMPORTANCE AND ADVANTAGE OF A THOROUGH KNOWLEDGE OF DIVINE TRUTH.

V. CHRISTIAN CHARITY; OR, THE DUTY OF CHARITY TO THE POOR, EXPLAINED AND ENFORCED.

VI. SEVEN DISCOURSES.

A NEW EDITION.

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A HISTORY

OF THE

WORK OF REDEMPTION,

CONTAINING

THE OUTLINES OF A BODY OF DIVINITY,

INCLUDING

A VIEW OF CHURCH HISTORY,

IN A METHOD ENTIRELY NEW.

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PREFACE.

It has long been desired by the friends of Mr. Edwards, that a number of his manuscripts should be published; but the disadvantage under which all posthumous publications must necessarily appear, and the difficulty of getting any considerable work printed in this infant country hitherto, have proved sufficient obstacles to the execution of such a proposal. The first of these obstacles made me doubt, for a considerable time after these manuscripts came into my hands, whether I could consistently with that regard which I owe to the honour of so worthy a parent, suffer any of them to appear in the world. However, being diffident of my own sentiments, and doubtful whether I were not over-jealous in this matter, I determined to submit to the opinion of gentlemen, who are friends both to the character of Mr. Edwards and to the cause of truth. The consequence was, that they gave their advice for publishing them.

The other obstacle was removed by a gentleman in the Church of Scotland, who was formerly a correspondent of Mr. Edwards. He engaged a bookseller to undertake the work, and also signified his desire that these following discourses in particular might be made public.

Mr. Edwards had planned a body of divinity, in a new method, and in the form of a history: in which he was first to shew how the most remarkable events, in all ages from the fall to the present times, recorded in sacred and profane history, were adapted to promote the work of redemption; and then to trace, by the light of scripture-prophecy, how the same work should be yet further carried on even to the end of the world. His heart was so much set on executing this plan, that he was considerably averse to accept the presidentship of Prince-town college, lest the duties of that office should put it out of his power.

The outlines of that work are now offered to the public, as contained in a series of sermons, preached at Northampton in 1739,* without any view to publication. On that account, the reader cannot reasonably expect all that from them, which he might justly have expected, had they been written with such a view, and prepared by the Author's own hand for the press.

* This is necessary to be remembered by the reader, in order to understand some chronological observations in the following work.

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As to elegance of composition, which is now esteemed so essential to all publications, it is well known, that the author did not make that his chief study. However, his other writings, though destitute of the ornaments of fine language, have it seems that solid merit, which has procured both to themselves and to him a considerable reputation in the world, and with many an high esteem. It is hoped that the reader will find in these discourses many traces of plain good sense, sound reasoning, and thorough knowledge of the sacred oracles, and real unfeigned piety: and that, as the plan is new, and many of the sentiments uncommon, they may afford entertainment and improvement to the ingenious, the inquisitive, and the pious reader; may confirm their faith in God's government of the world, in our holy Christian religion in general, and in many of its peculiar doctrines; may assist in studying with greater pleasure and advantage the historical and prophetical books of scripture; and may excite to a conversation becoming the gospel.

That this volume may produce these happy effects in all who shall peruse it, is the hearty desire and prayer of

The reader's most humble servant,

JONATHAN EDWARDS.

Newhaven, Feb. 25, 1773.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THEY who have a relish for the study of the scriptures, and have access to peruse the following sheets, will, I am persuaded, deem themselves indebted to the Reverend Mr. EDWARDS of Newhaven, for consenting to publish them. Though the acute philosopher and deep divine appears in them, yet they are in the general better calculated for the instruction and improvement of ordinary Christians, than those of President Edwards's writings, where the abstruse nature of the subject, or the subtle objections of opposers of the truth, led him to more abstract and metaphysical reasonings. The manuscript being intrusted to my care, I have not presumed to make any change in the sentiments or composition. I have, however, taken the liberty to reduce it from the form of sermons, which it originally bore, to that of a continued treatise; and I have so altered and diversified the marks of the several divisions and subdivisions, that each class of heads might be easily distinguished.

JOHN ERSKINE.

Edinburgh, April 29, 1774.

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A HISTORY

OF THE

WORK OF REDEMPTION.

General Introduction.

ISAIAH li. 8.

For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.

THE design of this chapter is to comfort the church under her sufferings, and the persecutions of her enemies; and the argument of consolation insisted on, is the constancy and perpetuity of God's mercy and faithfulness towards her, which shall be manifest in continuing to work salvation for her, protecting her against all assaults of her enemies, and carrying her safely through all the changes of the world, and finally, crowning her with victory and deliverance.

In the text, this happiness of the church of God is set forth by comparing it with the contrary fate of her enemies that oppress her. And therein we may observe,

I. How short-lived the power and prosperity of the church's enemies is: *The moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool;* i. e. however great their prosperity is, and however great their present glory, they shall by degrees consume and vanish away by a secret curse of God, till they come to nothing; and all their power and glory, and so their persecutions, eternally cease, and they be finally and irrecoverably ruined: as the finest and most glorious apparel will in time wear away, and be consumed by moths and rottenness. We learn who those are that shall thus consume away, by the foregoing verse, viz. those that are the enemies of God's people: *Hearken unto*

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me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law, fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.

II. The contrary happy lot and portion of God's church; expressed in these words, *My righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.* Who shall have the benefit of this, we also learn by the preceding verse, viz. They *that know righteousness*, and *the people in whose heart is God's law;* or, in one word, the church of God. And concerning their happiness, we may observe, wherein it consists; in its continuance.

1. Wherein it CONSISTS, viz. In God's righteousness and salvation towards them. By God's righteousness here, is meant his faithfulness in fulfilling his covenant-promises to his church, or, his faithfulness towards his church and people, in bestowing the benefits of the covenant of grace upon them. Though these benefits are bestowed of free and sovereign grace, as being altogether undeserved; yet as God has been pleased, by the promises of the covenant of grace, to bind himself to bestow them, they are bestowed in the exercise of God's righteousness or justice. And therefore the apostle says, Heb. vi. 10. *God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love.* And, 1 John i. 9. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* So the word *righteousness* is very often used in scripture for God's covenant-faithfulness; as in Nehem. ix. 8. *Thou hast performed thy words, for thou art righteous.* So we are often to understand righteousness and covenant-mercy for the same thing; as Psal. xxiv. 5. *He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.* Psalm xxxvi. 10. *Continue thy loving-kindness to them that know thee, and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.* And Psal. li. 14. *Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.* Dan. ix. 16. *O Lord, according to thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away.*—And so in innumerable other places.

The other word here used is *salvation.* Of these two, God's righteousness and his salvation, the one is the cause, of which the other is the effect. God's righteousness, or covenant-mercy, is the root, of which his salvation is the fruit. Both of them relate to the covenant of grace. The one is God's covenant-mercy and faithfulness, the other intends that work of God by which this covenant-mercy is accomplished in the fruits of it. For salvation is the sum of all those works of God by which the benefits that are by the covenant of grace are procured and bestowed.

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2. We may observe its *continuance*, signified here by two expressions; *for ever*, and *from generation to generation*. The latter seems to be explanatory of the former. The phrase *for ever*, is variously used in scripture. Sometimes thereby is meant *as long as a man lives*. It is said, that the servant who had his ear bored through with an awl to the door of his master, should be his *for ever*. Sometimes thereby is meant during the *continuance of the Jewish state*. Of many of the ceremonial and Levitical laws it is said, that they should be statutes *for ever*. Sometimes it means *as long as the world shall stand*, or to the end of the generations of men. Thus, Eccles. i. 4. *One generation passeth away, and another cometh; but the earth abideth for ever*. Sometimes thereby is meant *to all eternity*. So it is said, *God is blessed for ever*, Rom. i. 25. And so it is said, John vi. 51. "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live" *for ever*.—And which of these senses is here to be understood, the next words determine, viz. *to the end of the world*, or to the end of the generations of men. It is said in the next words, "and my salvation *from generation to generation*." Indeed the *fruits* of God's salvation shall remain after the end of the world, as appears by the 6th verse: *Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner, but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.* But the work of salvation itself toward the church shall continue to be wrought till then: till the end of the world God will go on to accomplish deliverance and salvation for the church, from all her enemies: for that is what the prophet is here speaking of. *Till the end of the world;* till her enemies cease to be, as to any power to molest the church. And this expression, *from generation to generation*, may determine us as to the time which God continues to carry on the work of salvation for his church, both with respect to the beginning and end. It is from generation to generation, *i. e.* throughout all generations; beginning with the generations of men on the earth, and not ending till these generations end.—And therefore we deduce from these words this

DOCTRINE.

The work of redemption is a work that God carries on from the fall of man to the end of the world.

The generations of mankind on the earth which began after the fall, by ordinary generation, are partakers of the

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corruption of nature that followed from it; and these generations, by which the human race is propagated, shall continue to the end of the world. These two are the limits of the generations of men on the earth; the fall of man, and the end of the world, or the day of judgment. The same are the limits of the work of redemption, as to those progressive works of God, by which that redemption is brought about and accomplished, though not as to the *fruits* of it; for they shall be to eternity.

The work of redemption and the work of salvation are the same thing. What is sometimes in scripture called God's *saving* his people, is in other places called his *redeeming* them. So Christ is called both the *Saviour* and the *Redeemer* of his people.

BEFORE entering on the proposed History of the Work of Redemption, I would explain the *terms* made use of in the doctrine;—and show what those *things* are that are designed to be accomplished by this great work of God.

FIRST. I would show in what sense the TERMS of the doctrine are used;—particularly the word *redemption;*—and, how this is a work of God, carried on from the fall of man to the end of the world.

I. The use of the word *redemption.*—And here it may be observed, that the work of redemption is sometimes understood in a more *limited* sense, for the *purchase* of salvation; for the word strictly signifies, a purchase of deliverance. If we take the word in this *restrained* sense, the work of redemption was not so long in doing; but was begun and finished with Christ's humiliation. It was begun with Christ's incarnation, carried on through his life, and finished with the time of his remaining under the power of death, which ended in his resurrection. And so we say, that on the day of his resurrection Christ finished the work of redemption, *i. e.* then the purchase was finished, and the work itself, and all that appertained to it, was *virtually* done and finished, but not *actually*.

But sometimes the work of redemption is taken more *largely*, as including all that God accomplishes tending to this end; not only the purchase itself, but also all God's works that were properly preparatory to the purchase, and accomplishing the success of it. So that the whole dispensation, as it includes the preparation and purchase, the application and success of Christ's redemption, is here called the work of *redemption.* All that Christ does in this great affair as mediator, in any of his offices, either of prophet, priest, or king; either when he was in this world, in his human nature, or before or since. And it includes not only what Christ the

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mediator has done, but also what the Father, or the Holy Ghost, have done, as united or confederated in this design of redeeming sinful men; or, in one word, all that is wrought in execution of the eternal covenant of redemption. This is what I call the work of redemption in the *doctrine;* for it is all but one work, one design. The various dispensations or works that belong to it, are but the several parts of one scheme. It is but one design that is formed, to which all the offices of Christ directly tend, and in which all the persons of the Trinity conspire. All the various dispensations that belong to it are united; and the several wheels are one machine, to answer one end, and produce one effect.

II. When I say, this work is *carried on* from the fall of man to the end of the world; in order to the full understanding of my meaning in it, I would desire two or three things to be observed.

1. That it is not meant, that nothing was done in order to it *before* the fall of man. Some things were done before the world was created, yea from eternity. The persons of the Trinity were, as it were, confederated in a design, and a covenant of redemption. In this covenant the Father had appointed the Son, and the Son had undertaken the work; and all things to be accomplished in the work were stipulated and agreed. There were things done at the *creation* of the world, in order to that work; for the world itself seems to have been created in order to it. The work of creation was in order to God's works of providence. So that if it be inquired, which are greatest, the works of creation or those of providence? I answer, the works of providence; because those of providence are the *end* of his works of creation; as the building of a house, or the forming of a machine, is for its *use*. But God's main work of providence is this of redemption, as will more fully appear hereafter.

The creation of heaven was in order to the work of redemption; as an habitation for the redeemed; Matth. xxv. 34. *Then shall the King say unto them on his right, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* Even the *angels* were created to be employed in this work. And therefore the apostle calls them, *ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation:* Heb. i. 14. As to this *lower world*, it was doubtless created to be a stage upon which this great and wonderful work of redemption should be transacted: and therefore, as might be shown, in many respects this lower world is wisely fitted, in its formation, for such a state of man as he is in since the fall, under a possibility of redemption. So that when it is said, that the work of redemption is carried on from the fall of man to the end

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of the world, it is not meant, that all that ever was done in order to redemption has been done since the fall. Nor,

2. Is it meant that there will be no remaining fruits of this work *after* the end of the world. That glory and blessedness that will be the sum of all the fruits, will remain to all the saints for ever. The work of redemption is not a work always doing and never accomplished. The *fruits* of it are eternal, but the *work* has an issue. In the issue the end will be obtained; which end will last for ever. As those things which were in order to this work—God's electing love, and the covenant of redemption—never had a beginning; so the fruits of this work never will have an end. And therefore,

3. When it is said in the doctrine, that this is a work that God is *carrying on* from the fall of man to the end of the world, what I mean is, that those things which belong to this work itself, and are parts of the scheme, are all this while accomplishing. There were some things done preparatory to its beginning, and the fruits of it will remain after it is finished. But the work itself was begun immediately upon the fall, and will continue to the end of the world. The various dispensations of God during this space, belong to the same work, and to the same design, and have all one issue; and therefore are all to be reckoned but as several successive motions of one machine, to bring about in the conclusion one great event.

And here also we must distinguish between the parts of *redemption* itself, and the parts of the *work* by which that redemption is wrought out. There is a difference between the parts of the *benefits*, and the parts of the *work* of God by which those benefits were procured and bestowed. For example, the redemption of Israel out of Egypt, considered as the benefit which they enjoyed, consisted of two parts, viz. their deliverance from their former Egyptian bondage and misery, and their being brought into a more happy state, as the servants of God, and heirs of Canaan. But there are many more things which are *parts* of that work. To this belongs his calling of Moses, his sending him to Pharaoh, and all the signs and wonders he wrought in Egypt, and his bringing such terrible judgments on the Egyptians, and many other things.

Such is this work by which God effects redemption, and it is carried on from the fall of man to the end of the world, in two respects.

1. With respect to the *effect* wrought on the souls of the redeemed; which is common to all ages. This effect is the application of redemption with respect to the souls of particular persons, in converting, justifying, sanctifying, and glorifying them. By these things they are actually redeemed, and receive the benefit of the work in its effects. And in this

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sense the work of redemption is carried on in all ages, from the fall of man to the end of the world. The work of God in converting souls, opening blind eyes, unstopping deaf ears, raising dead souls to life, and rescuing the miserable captives out of the hands of Satan, was begun soon after the fall of man, has been carried on in the world ever since to this day, and will be to the end of the world. God has always had such a church in the world. Though sometimes it has been reduced to a very narrow compass, and to low circumstances; yet it has never wholly failed.

And as God carries on the work of converting the souls of fallen men through all ages, so he goes on to justify them, to blot out all their sins, and to accept them as righteous in his sight, through the righteousness of Christ. He goes on to adopt and receive them from being the children of Satan, to be his own children; to carry on the work of his grace which he has begun in them, to comfort them with the consolations of his Spirit, and to bestow upon them, when their bodies die, that eternal glory which is the fruit of Christ's purchase. What is said, Rom. viii. 30. *Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified*;—is applicable to all ages, from the fall to the end of the world.

And the way of effecting this, is carried on by repeating continually the same work over again, though in different persons, from age to age. But,

2. The work of redemption with respect to the grand design in general, as it respects the universal subject and end, is carried on—not merely by repeating or renewing the same effect in the different subjects of it, but—by many successive works and dispensations of God, all tending to one great effect, united as the several parts of a scheme, and all together making up one great work. Like a temple that is building; first, the workmen are sent forth, then the materials are gathered, the ground is fitted, and the foundation laid; then the superstructure is erected, one part after another, till at length the top-stone is laid, and all is finished. Now the work of redemption in this large sense, may be compared to such a building. God began it immediately after the fall, and will proceed to the end of the world. Then shall the top-stone be brought forth, and all will appear complete and glorious.

This work is carried on in the *former* respect, as being an effect common to all ages; and in the *latter* respect—the grand design in general—not only by that which is common to all ages, but by successive works wrought in different ages. All are parts of one great scheme, whereby one work is brought about by various steps, one step in one age, and another in another. It is this last that I shall chiefly insist upon, though

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not excluding the former; for one necessarily supposes the other.

Having thus explained what I mean by the *terms* of the doctrine; I now proceed,

SECONDLY, to how what is the *design* of this great work, or what *things* are designed to be accomplished by it. In order to see how any design is carried on, we must first know what it is. To know forinstance, how a workman proceeds, and to understand the various steps he takes in order to accomplish a piece of work, we need to be informed what he *intends* to accomplish; otherwise we may stand by, seeing him do one thing after another and be quite puzzled, because we see nothing of his scheme. Suppose an architect, with a great number of hands, were building some great palace; and one that was a stranger to such things should stand by, and see some men digging in the earth, others bringing timber, others hewing stones, and the like; he might see that there was a great deal done, but if he knew not the *design*, it would all appear to him confusion. And therefore, that the great works and dispensations of God which belong to this great affair of redemption may not appear like confusion to you, I would set before you briefly the *main things* designed to be accomplished.

I. It is to put all God's enemies under his feet, and that his goodness may finally appear triumphant over all evil. Soon after the world was created, evil entered into the world in the fall of the angels and man. Presently after God had made rational creatures, there were enemies who rose up against him from among them; and in the fall of man evil entered into this lower world; where also God's enemies rose up against him. Satan endeavoured to frustrate his design in the creation of this lower world, to destroy his workmanship, to wrest the government of it out of his hands, to usurp the throne, and set up himself as the God of this world, instead of him who made it. To these ends he introduced sin into the world; and having made man God's enemy, he introduced guilt, and death, and the most dreadful misery.

Now one great design of God, in the affair of redemption, was to subdue those enemies. 1 Cor. xv. 25. *He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.* Things were originally so planned, that he might disappoint, confound, and triumph over Satan; and that he might be bruised under Christ's feet, Gen. iii. 15. The promise was given, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. It was a part of God's original design in this work, to destroy the works of the devil, and confound him in all his purposes: 1 John iii. 8. *For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.* It was a part of his design to triumph over sin, and over the corruptions

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of men, and to root them out of the hearts of his people, by conforming them to himself. He designed also, that his grace should triumph over man's guilt, and sin's infinite demerit. Again, it was a part of his design, to triumph over death; and however this is the last enemy that shall be destroyed, yet that shall finally be vanquished and destroyed. Thus God appears glorious above all evil, and triumphant over all his enemies by the work of redemption.

II. God's design was perfectly to restore all the ruins of the fall, so far as concerns the elect part of the world, by his Son; and therefore we read of the *restitution of all things*, Acts iii. 21. *Whom the heaven must receive, until the times of the restitution of all things;* and of the *times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord Jesus*, Acts iii. 19. *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.*

Man's *soul* was ruined by the fall; the image of God was defaced; man's nature was corrupted, and he became dead in sin. The design of God was to restore the soul of man to life, and the divine image in conversion, to carry on the change in sanctification, and to perfect it in glory. Man's body was ruined; by the fall it became subject to death. The design of God was to restore it from this ruin, and not only to deliver it from death in the resurrection, but to deliver it from mortality itself, in making it like unto Christ's glorious body. The *world* was ruined, as to man, as effectually as if it had been reduced to *chaos* again; all heaven and earth were overthrown. But the design of God was to restore all, and as it were to create a new heaven and a new earth: Is. lxv. 17. *Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.* 2 Pet. iii. 13. *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

The work by which this was to be done was begun immediately after the fall, and so is carried on till all is finished, when the whole world, heaven and earth, shall be restored. There shall be, as it were, new heavens, and a new earth, in a spiritual sense, at the end of the world. Thus it is represented, Rev. xxi. 1. *And I saw a new heaven, and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.*

III. Another great design of God in the work of redemption, was to gather together in one all things in Christ, in heaven and in earth, *i. e.* all elect creatures; to bring all elect creatures, in heaven and in earth, to an union one to another in one body, under one head, and to unite all together in one body to God the Father. This was begun soon after the fall, and is carried on through all ages, and shall be finished at the end of the world,

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IV. God designed by this work to perfect and complete the *glory* of all the elect by Christ—glory, "such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor has ever entered into the heart of man." He intended to bring them to perfect excellency and beauty in his holy image, which is the proper beauty of spiritual beings; and to advance them to a glorious degree of honour, and raise them to an ineffable height of pleasure and joy. Thus he designed to glorify the whole church of elect men in soul and body, and with them to bring the glory of the elect angels to its highest elevation under one head.

V. In all this God designed to accomplish the glory of the blessed Trinity in an eminent degree. God had a design of glorifying himself from eternity; yea, to glorify each person in the Godhead. The *end* must be considered as first in order of nature, and then the means; and therefore we must conceive, that God having professed this end, had then as it were the means to choose; and the principal mean that he adopted was this great work of redemption. It was his design in this work to glorify his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ; and by the Son to glorify the Father: John xiii. 31, 32. *Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.* It was his design that the Son should thus be glorified, and should glorify the Father by what should be accomplished by the Spirit to the glory of the Spirit, that the whole Trinity, conjunctly, and each person singly, might be exceedingly glorified. The work that was the appointed means of this, was begun immediately after the fall, and is carried on till, and finished at the end of the world, when all this intended glory shall be fully accomplished in all things.

Having thus explained the *terms* in the doctrine, and shown what *things* are to be accomplished by this great work of God, I proceed now to the proposed History; that is, to show how what was designed by the work of redemption has been accomplished, in the *various steps* of this work, from the fall of man to the end of the world.

In order to this, I would divide this whole space of time into three periods:——the

1st, reaching from the fall of man to the incarnation of Christ;—the

2d, from Christ's incarnation till his resurrection; or the whole time of Christ's humiliation;—the

3d, from thence to the end of the world.

Some may be ready to think this a very unequal division: and so indeed it is in some respects, because the second period, although so much shorter than either of the other—

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being but between thirty and forty years, whereas both the other contain thousands—in this affair is more than both the others.—I would therefore proceed to show distinctly how the work of redemption is carried on through each of these periods in their order, under three propositions.

I. That from the fall of man to the incarnation of Christ, God was doing those things which were preparatory to his coming, as forerunners and earnests of it.

II. That the time from Christ's incarnation to his resurrection, was spent in procuring and purchasing redemption.

III. That the space of time from the resurrection of Christ to the end of the world, is all taken up in bringing about or accomplishing the great effect or success of that purpose.

In a particular consideration of these three propositions, the great truth taught in the doctrine may perhaps appear in a clear light.

PERIOD I.

From the Fall to the Incarnation.

The great works of God in the world, during this whole space of time, were all preparatory. There were many great changes and revolutions in the world, and they were all only the turning of the wheels of providence to make way for the coming of Christ, and what he was to do in the world. Hither tended especially all God's great works towards his church. The church was under various dispensations of providence, and in very various circumstances, before Christ came; but all these dispensations were to prepare the way for his coming. God wrought salvation for the souls of men through all that space of time, though the number was very small to what it was afterwards; and all this was by way of anticipation. All the souls that were saved before Christ came, were only the earnests of the future harvest.

God wrought many deliverances for his church and people before Christ came; but these were only so many images and forerunners of the great salvation. The church during that space of time enjoyed the light of divine revelation. They had in a degree the light of the gospel. But all these revelations were only so many earnests of the great light that he should bring who came to be the light of the world. That whole space of time was the time of night, wherein the church of God was not indeed wholly without light; but it was like the light of the moon and stars; a dim light in comparison of the light of the sun, and mixed with a great deal

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of darkness. It had no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth, 2 Cor. iii. 10. The church had indeed the light of the sun, but it was only as reflected from the moon and stars. The church all that while was a minor. Gal. iv. 1—3. "*Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the Father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.*"

But here, for the greater clearness and distinctness, I shall subdivide this period into parts:

1st, From the fall to the flood.
2d, From thence to the calling of Abraham.
3d, From thence to Moses.
4th, From thence to David.
5th, From David to the captivity in Babylon.
6th, From thence to the incarnation of Christ.

PART I.

From the Fall to the Flood.

Though this period was the most distant from Christ's incarnation; yet then was this glorious building begun.

I. As soon as man fell, Christ entered on his mediatorial work. Then it was that he began to execute the work and office of a mediator. He had undertaken it before the world was made. He stood engaged with the Father to appear as man's mediator, and to take on that office when there should be occasion, from all eternity. But now the time was come. Christ the eternal Son of God clothed himself with the mediatorial character, and therein presented himself before the Father. He immediately stepped in between a holy, infinite, offended Majesty, and offending mankind. He was accepted in his interposition; and so wrath was prevented from going forth in the full execution of that amazing curse that man had brought on himself.

It is manifest that Christ began to exercise the office of *mediator* between God and man as soon as ever man fell, because mercy began to be exercised towards man immediately. There was mercy in the forbearance of God, that he did not destroy him, as he did the angels when they fell. But

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there is no mercy exercised toward fallen man but through a mediator. If God had not in mercy restrained Satan, he would immediately have seized on his prey. Christ began to do the part of an *intercessor* for man as soon as he fell; for there is no mercy exercised towards man but what is obtained through Christ's intercession. From that day Christ took on him the care of the church, in the exercise of all his offices. He undertook to *teach* mankind in the exercise of his *prophetical* office; to *intercede* for fallen man in his *priestly* office; and to *govern* the church and the world as a king. He from that time took upon him the care of defending his elect church from all their enemies. When Satan, the grand enemy, had conquered and overthrown man, the business of resisting and conquering him was committed to Christ. He thenceforward undertook to manage that subtle powerful adversary. He was then appointed the Captain of the Lord's hosts, the Captain of their salvation. Henceforward this lower world, with all its concerns, devolved upon the Son of God: for when man had sinned, God the Father would have no more to do *immediately* with this world of mankind, that had apostatized from and rebelled against him. He would henceforward act only through a mediator, either in teaching men, or in governing, or bestowing any benefits on them.

And therefore, when we read in sacred history what God did, from time to time, towards his church and people, and how he revealed himself to them, we are to understand it especially of the second person of the Trinity. When we read of God appearing after the fall, in some visible form or outward symbol of his presence, we are ordinarily, if not universally, to understand it of the second person of the Trinity. John i. 18. "*No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*" He is therefore called *the image of the invisible God*, Col. i. 15; intimating, that though God the Father be invisible, yet Christ is his image or representation, by which he is seen.

Yea, not only this lower world devolved on Christ, that he might have the care and government of it, and order it agreeably to his design of redemption, but also in some respect the whole universe. The *angels* from that time are subject to him in his mediatorial office, as is manifest by the scripture history, wherein we have accounts of their acting as ministering spirits in the affairs of the church.

And therefore we may suppose, that immediately on the fall of Adam, it was made known in heaven among the angels, that God had a design of redemption with respect to fallen man: that Christ had now taken upon him the office and work of a mediator between God and man; and that they were to be subservient to him in this office. And as Christ, in this office,

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has been solemnly installed the King of heaven, and is thenceforward as God-man, the Light, the Sun of heaven, (agreeable to Rev. xxi. 23.) so this revelation made in heaven among the angels, was as it were the first dawning of this light there. When Christ ascended into heaven after his passion, and was solemnly enthroned, then this sun rose in heaven, even the Lamb that is the light of the New Jerusalem.

II. Presently upon this the gospel was first revealed on earth, in these words, Gen. iii. 15. *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* We must suppose, that God's intention of redeeming fallen man was first signified in heaven, before it was signified on earth, because the business of the angels, as ministering spirits of the mediator, required it; for as soon as ever Christ had taken on him the work of a mediator, it was requisite that the angels should be ready immediately to be subservient to him in that office: so that the light first dawned in heaven; but very soon after the same was signified on earth. In those words of God there was an intimation of another surety to be appointed for man, after the first surety had failed. This was the first revelation of the covenant of grace; the first dawning of the light of the gospel on earth.

This lower world before the fall enjoyed noon-day light; the light of the knowledge of God, the light of his glory, and the light of his favour. But when man fell, all this light was at once extinguished, and the world reduced back again to total darkness; a worse darkness than that which was in the beginning of the world, (Gen. i. 2.) *Darkness was upon the face of the deep*, a darkness a thousand times more remediless than that. Neither men nor angels could find out any way whereby this darkness might be scattered. It appeared in its blackness when *Adam* and his wife saw that they were naked, and sewed fig-leaves; when they heard the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden, and hid themselves among the trees. When God first called them to an account, and said to *Adam, What is this that thou hast done? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?* Then we may suppose that their hearts were filled with shame and terror. But these words of God, (Gen. iii. 15.) were the first dawning of gospel light, after this dismal darkness. Before this there was not one glimpse of light, any beam of comfort, or the least hope. It was an obscure yet comprehensive revelation of the gospel; not indeed made to *Adam* or *Eve* directly, but contained in what God said to the serpent.

Here was a certain intimation of a merciful design by "the seed of the woman," which was like the first glimmerings of the light in the east when the day first dawns. This intima-

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tion of mercy was given, even before sentence was pronounced on either *Adam* or *Eve*, from tenderness to them, lest they should be overborne with a sentence of condemnation, without having any thing held forth whence they could gather any hope.

One of those great things that were intended to be done by the work of redemption, is more plainly intimated, viz. God subduing his enemies under the feet of his Son. God's design of this was now first declared. Satan probably had triumphed greatly in the fall of man, as though he had defeated the designs of God in his creation. But in these words God gives him a plain intimation, that he should not finally triumph, but that a complete victory and triumph should be obtained over him by the seed of the woman.

This revelation of the gospel was the first thing that Christ did in his prophetical office. From the fall of man to the incarnation of Christ, God was doing those things that were preparatory to Christ's coming to effect redemption, and were forerunners and earnests of it. And one of those things was to foretel and promise it, as he did from age to age, till Christ came. This was the first promise given, the first prediction that ever was made of it.

III. Soon after this, the custom of sacrificing was appointed, to be a standing type of the sacrifice of Christ, till he should come, and offer up himself a sacrifice to God. Sacrificing was not a custom first established by the Levitical law, for it had been a part of God's instituted worship from the beginning. We read of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, offering sacrifice, and before them Noah and Abel. And this was by divine appointment; for it was part of God's worship in his church, which was offered up in faith, and which he accepted. This proves that it was by his institution; for sacrificing is no part of natural worship. The light of nature doth not teach men to offer up beasts in sacrifice to God; and seeing it was not enjoined by the law of nature, to be acceptable to God, it must be by some positive command or institution; for God has declared his abhorrence of such worship as is taught by the precept of men without his institution. (Is. xxix. 13.) And such worship as hath not a warrant from divine institution, cannot be offered up in faith, because faith has no foundation where there is no divine appointment. Men have no warrant to hope for God's acceptance, in that which is not of his appointment, and in that to which he hath not promised his acceptance: and therefore it follows, that the custom of offering sacrifices to God was instituted soon after the fall; for the scripture teaches us, that Abel offered *the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof*, Gen. iv. 4; and that he was accepted of God in this offering, Heb. xi. 4. And there is nothing in the

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story intimating that the institution was first given when Abel offered up that sacrifice to God; but rather that Abel only complied with a custom already established.

It is very probable that sacrifice was instituted immediately after God had revealed the covenant of grace, (Gen. iii. 15;) as the foundation on which the custom of sacrificing was built. That promise was the first stone laid towards this glorious building, the work of redemption; and the next stone, the institution of sacrifices, to be a type of the *great sacrifice.*

The next thing that we have an account of, after God had pronounced sentence on the serpent, on the woman, and on the man, was, that God made them coats of skins, and clothed them; which, by the generality of divines, are thought to be the skins of beasts slain in sacrifice. For we have no account of any thing else that should be the occasion of man's slaying beasts, except to offer them in sacrifice, till after the flood. Men were not wont to eat the flesh of beasts as their common food till after the flood. The first food of man before the fall, was the fruit of the trees of paradise; and after the fall, his food was the produce of the field: Gen. iii. 18. *And thou shalt eat the herb of the field.* The first grant that he had to eat flesh as his common food, was after the flood: Gen. ix. 3. *Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.* So that it is likely that these skins with which Adam and Eve were clothed, were the skins of their sacrifices. God's clothing them with these was a lively figure of their being clothed with the righteousness of Christ. It was God that gave them this clothing; for it is said, *God made them coats of skins, and clothed them.* The righteousness with which we are clothed, is of God. It is he only clothes the naked soul.

Our first parents, who were naked, were clothed at the expence of life. Beasts were slain, in order to afford them clothing. So doth Christ, to afford clothing to our naked souls. The tabernacle in the wilderness, which signified the church, was covered with rams' skins died red, as though they were dipped in blood, to signify that Christ's righteousness was wrought out through the pains of death, under which he shed his precious blood.

We observed before, that the light that the church enjoyed from the fall of man, till Christ came, was like the light which we enjoy in the night; not the light of the sun directly, but as reflected from the moon and other luminaries; which light prefigured Christ, the Sun of righteousness that was afterwards to arise. This light they had chiefly two ways: one was by predictions of Christ to come; the other was by types and shadows, whereby his coming and redemption were prefigured. The first thing that was done to prepare the way for Christ in

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the former of these ways, was in that promise noticed in the foregoing particular; and the first thing of the latter kind, was that institution of sacrifices that we are now upon. As that promise in Gen. iii. 15. was the first dawn of gospel light after the fall in *prophecy;* so the institution of *sacrifices* was the first hint of it in types. The former was done in pursuance of Christ's prophetical office; in the latter, Christ exhibited himself in his priestly office.

The institution of sacrifices was a great thing done towards preparing the way for Christ's coming, and working out redemption. For the sacrifices of the Old Testament were the main of all the Old Testament types of Christ and his redemption; and it tended to establish in the minds of God's visible church the necessity of a propitiatory sacrifice, in order to the Deity's being satisfied for sin; and so prepared the way for the reception of the glorious gospel, that reveals the great sacrifice in the visible church, and not only so, but through the world of mankind. For from this institution of sacrifices, all nations derived the custom of sacrificing to the gods, to atone for their sins. No nation, however barbarous, was found without it. This is a great evidence of the truth of the Christian religion; for no nation, except the Jews, could tell how they came by this custom, or to what purpose it was to offer sacrifices to their deities. The light of nature did not teach them any such thing. That did not teach them that the gods were hungry, and fed upon the flesh which they burnt in sacrifice; and yet they all had this custom; of which no other account can be given, but that they derived it from Noah, who had it from his ancestors, on whom God had enjoined it as a type of the great sacrifice of Christ. However, by this means all nations of the world had their minds possessed with this notion, that an atonement or sacrifice for sin was necessary; and a way was made for their more readily receiving the great doctrine of the gospel, the atonement and sacrifice of Christ.

IV. God soon after the fall began actually to *save* the souls of men through Christ's redemption. In this, Christ, who had lately taken upon him the work of mediator between God and man, did first begin that work, wherein he appeared in the exercise of his *kingly* office; as in the sacrifices he was represented in his *priestly* office, and in the first prediction of redemption by Christ he had appeared in the exercise of his *prophetical* office. In that prediction the light of Christ's redemption first began to dawn in the prophecies of it; in the institution of sacrifices it first began to dawn in the *types* of it; in this, viz. his beginning actually to save men, it first began to dawn in the *fruit* of it.

It is probable, therefore, that Adam and Eve were the first fruits of Christ's redemption; it is probable by God's manner

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of treating them, by his comforting them as he did, after their awakenings and terrors. They were awakened, and ashamed with a sense of their guilt, after their eyes were opened, and they saw that they were naked, and sewed fig-leaves to cover their nakedness; as the sinner, under the first awakenings, is wont to endeavour to hide the nakedness of his soul, by a fancied righteousness of his own. Then they were further terrified and awakened, by hearing the voice of God as he was coming to condemn them. Their coverings of fig-leaves do not answer the purpose; but notwithstanding these, they ran to hide themselves among the trees of the garden, because they were naked, not daring to trust to their fig-leaves to hide their nakedness from God. Then they were further awakened by God's calling of them to a strict account. But while their terrors were raised to such a height, and they stood, as we may suppose, trembling and astonished before their judge, without any expedient whence they could gather any hope, then God took care to hold forth some encouragement, to keep them from the dreadful effects of despair under their awakenings, by giving a hint of a design of mercy by a Saviour, even before he pronounced sentence against them. And when after this he proceeded to pronounce sentence, whereby we may suppose their terrors were further raised, God soon after took care to encourage them, and to let them see, that he had not wholly cast them off, by taking a fatherly care of them in their fallen, naked, and miserable state, by making them coats of skins and clothing them. Which also manifested an acceptance of those sacrifices that they offered to God, which were types of what God had promised, when he said, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.* This promise, there is reason to think, they believed and embraced. Eve seems plainly to express her hope in and dependence on that promise, in what she says at the birth of Cain, Gen. iv. 1. *I have gotten a man from the Lord; i. e.* as God has promised, that my seed should bruise the serpent's head; so now has God given me this pledge and token of it, and I have a seed born. She plainly owns, that this child was from God, and hoped that her promised seed was to be of this, her eldest son; though she was mistaken, as *Abraham* was with respect to *Ishmael*, as *Jacob* was with respect to *Esau*, and as *Samuel* was with respect to the first-born of *Jesse*. And especially does what she said at the birth of Seth, express her hope and dependence on the promise of God; (ver. 25.) *For God hath appointed me another seed, instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.*

Thus it is exceeding probable, if not evident, that as Christ took on him the work of mediator as soon as man fell; so that he now immediately began his work of redemption in its *effect*, and that he immediately encountered his great enemy

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the devil, whom he had undertaken to conquer, and rescued those two first captives out of his hands; therein baffling him, soon after his triumph over them, whereby he had made them his captives. And though he seemed sure of them and all their posterity, Christ the Redeemer soon showed him that he was mistaken. He let him see it, in delivering those first captives, and so soon gave him an instance of the fulfilment of that threatening, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head;* and in this instance a presage of his subduing all his enemies under his feet.

After this we have another instance of redemption in one of their children, righteous Abel, as the scripture calls him; whose soul perhaps was the first that went to heaven through Christ's redemption. In him we have at least the first recorded instance of the death of a redeemed person. If he was the first, then as the redemption of Christ began to dawn before in the souls of men in their conversion and justification, in him it first began to dawn in glorification; and in him the angels began first to do the part of ministering spirits to Christ, in going forth to conduct to glory the souls of the redeemed. And in him the elect angels in heaven had the first opportunity to see so wonderful a thing as the soul of one of the fallen race of mankind, that had been sunk by the fall into such an abyss of sin and misery, brought to heaven, and in the enjoyment of heavenly glory, which was a much greater thing than if they had seen him returned to the earthly paradise. Thus they saw the glorious effect of Christ's redemption, in the great honour and happiness that was procured for sinful, miserable creatures.

V. The next remarkable thing that God did in farther carrying on this great redemption, was the first uncommon pouring out of the Spirit, through Christ, in the days of *Enos*. We read, Gen. iv. 26. *Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.* The meaning of those words has been considerably controverted among divines. We cannot suppose the meaning is, that then first men performed the duty of prayer. Prayer is a duty of natural religion, and a duty to which a spirit of piety does most naturally lead men. Prayer is the very breath of a spirit of piety; we cannot suppose, therefore, that holy men before, for above two hundred years, had lived without prayer. Therefore some divines think, that the meaning is, that then men first began to perform public worship, or to call upon the name of the Lord in public assemblies. However, thus much must necessarily be understood by it, viz. that there was something *new* in the visible church of God with respect to calling upon the name of the Lord; that there was a great *addition* to the performance of this duty; and that in some respect or other it was carried far beyond

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what it ever had been before, which must be the consequence of a remarkable pouring out of the Spirit of God.

If it was now first that men were stirred up to meet in assemblies to assist one another in seeking God, so as they never had done before, it argues something extraordinary as the cause; and could be from nothing but the uncommon influences of God's Spirit. We see by experience, that a remarkable pouring out of God's Spirit is always attended with such an effect, viz. a great increase of the performance of the duty of prayer. When the Spirit of God begins a work on men's hearts, it immediately sets them to calling on the name of the Lord. As it was with Paul after the Spirit of God had arrested him; *Behold, he prayeth!* so it has been in all remarkable effusions of the Spirit of God recorded in scripture; and so it is foretold it will be in the latter days. It is foretold, that the holy Spirit will be poured out as a spirit of grace and supplication, Zech. xii. 10. See also Zeph. iii. 9. *For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.*

And when it is said, *Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord*, no more can be intended by it, than that this was the *first remarkable* season of this nature that ever was. It was the beginning, or the first, of such a work of God. In this manner such an expression is commonly used in scripture: so, 1 Sam. xiv. 35. *And Saul built an altar unto the Lord; the same was the first altar that he built unto the Lord.* In the Hebrew it is, as you may see in the margin, *that altar he began to build unto the Lord*, Heb. ii. 3. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which first began to be spoken by the Lord?*

It may here be observed, that from the fall of man, to our day, the work of redemption in its effect has mainly been carried on by remarkable communications of the Spirit of God. Though there be a more constant influence of God's Spirit always in some degree attending his ordinances; yet the way in which the greatest things have been done towards carrying on this work, always have been by remarkable effusions, at special seasons of mercy, as may fully appear hereafter in our further prosecution of our subject. And this in the days of *Enos*, was the first remarkable pouring out of the Spirit of God that ever was. There had been a saving work of God on the hearts of some before; but now God was pleased to bring in a harvest of souls to Christ; so that in this we see that great building, of which God laid the foundation immediately after the fall of man, carried on further, and built higher, than ever it had been before.

VI. The next thing I shall notice, is the eminently holy

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life of *Enoch*, who, we have reason to think, was a saint of greater eminency than any that had been before him; so that in this respect the work of redemption was carried on to a still greater height. With respect to its effect in the visible church in *general*, we observed above how it was carried higher in the days of *Enos* than ever it had been before. Probably Enoch was one of the saints of that harvest; for he lived all the days that he did live on earth, in the days of *Enos*. And with respect to the *degree* to which this work was carried in the soul of a *particular person*, it was raised to a greater height in Enoch than ever before. His soul, built on Christ, was built up in holiness to a greater height than any preceding instance. He was a wonderful instance of Christ's redemption, and of the efficacy of his grace.

VII. In *Enoch's* time, God more expressly revealed the coming of Christ than he had before done. Jude, ver. 14, 15. *And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.* Here Enoch prophesies of the coming of Christ. It does not seem to be confined to any *particular* coming of Christ; but it has respect in general to Christ's coming in his kingdom, and is fulfilled in a degree in both his first and second coming; and indeed in *every* remarkable manifestation Christ has made of himself in the world, for the saving of his people, and the destroying of his enemies. It is very parallel in this respect with many other prophecies of the Old Testament; and, in particular, with that great prophecy of Christ's coming in his kingdom, whence the Jews principally took their notion of the kingdom of heaven, Daniel vii. 10. *A fiery stream issued, and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.* And ver. 13, 14. *I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the son of man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.* And though it is not unlikely that *Enoch* might have a more immediate respect in this prophecy, to the approaching destruction of the old world by the flood, which was a remarkable resemblance of Christ's destruction of all his enemies at his second coming, yet it doubtless looked beyond the type to the antitype.

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And as this prophecy of Christ's coming is more express than any preceding it; so it is an instance of the increase of that gospel light which began to dawn presently after the fall of man; and of that building which is the subject of our present discourse, being yet further carried on, and built up higher than it had been before.

And here, by the way, I would observe, that the increase of gospel light, and the progress of the work of redemption, as it respects the church in general, from its erection to the end of the world, is very similar to the progress of the same work, and the same light, in a particular soul, from the time of its conversion, till it is perfected and crowned in glory. Sometimes the light shines brighter, and at other times more obscurely; sometimes grace prevails, at other times it seems to languish for a great while together; now corruption prevails, and then grace revives again. But in general grace is growing: from its first infusion, till it is perfected in glory, the kingdom of Christ is building up in the soul. So it is with respect to the great affair in general, as it relates to the universal subject of it, and as it is carried on from its first beginning, till it is perfected at the end of the world.

VIII. The next remarkable thing towards carrying on this work, was the translation of Enoch into heaven. (Gen. v. 24.) *And Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him.* Moses, in giving an account of the genealogy of those that were of the line of *Noah*, does not say concerning *Enoch*, he lived so long and he died, as he does of the rest; but, *he was not, for God took him; i. e.* he translated him; in body and soul carried him to heaven without dying, as it is explained in Heb. xi. 5. *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death.* By this wonderful work of God, the work of redemption was carried to a greater height, in several respects, than it had been before.

When showing what God aimed at in the work of redemption, or what were the main things he intended to bring to pass; among other things I mentioned the perfect restoration of the ruins of the fall, with respect to the elect, both in soul and body. Now this translation of *Enoch* was the first instance of restoration with respect to the *body*. There had been many instances of restoring the *soul* of man by Christ's redemption, but none of redeeming and actually saving the body, till now. All the *bodies* of the elect are to be saved as well as their *souls*. At the end of the world, all their bodies shall actually be redeemed; those that then shall have been dead, by a resurrection; and others, that then shall be living, by causing them to undergo a glorious change. There was a number of the bodies of saints raised and glorified, at the resurrection of Christ; and before that there was an instance of a

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body glorified in Elijah. But the first instance of all was this of Enoch.

By this, the work of redemption was carried on still further; as, this wonderful work of God afforded a great increase of gospel light to the church, hereby it had a clearer manifestation of a future state, and of the glorious reward of the saints in heaven. We are told, 2 Tim. i. 10. *That life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel.* What was said in the Old Testament of a future state, is very obscure, in comparison with the more full, plain, and abundant revelation given of it in the New. But yet even in those early days, the church of God, in this instance, was favoured with an instance of it set before their eyes, in that one of their brethren was actually taken up to heaven without dying; which we have all reason to think the church of God knew then, as they afterwards knew Elijah's translation. And as this was a clearer manifestation of a future state than the church had enjoyed before, so it was a pledge or earnest of that future glorification of all the saints which God intended through the redemption of Jesus Christ.

IX. The next thing that I shall observe, was the upholding of the church of God in that family from which Christ was to proceed during that great and general defection which preceded the flood. The church of God, in all probability, was small, in comparison with the rest of the world, from the time that mankind began to multiply; or from the time, (Gen. iv. 16.) *when Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod;* which, being interpreted, is the land of *banishment*. The church seems to have been kept up chiefly in the posterity of *Seth;* for this was the seed that God appointed instead of *Abel,* whom *Cain* slew. But we cannot reasonably suppose that *Seth's* posterity were one fiftieth part of the world: *For Adam was one hundred and thirty years old when Seth was born.* But *Cain,* who seems to have been the leader of those that were not of the church, was *Adam's* eldest child, and probably was born soon after the fall, which doubtless was soon after *Adam's* creation; so that there was time for *Cain* to have many sons before *Seth* was born; besides many other children that probably Adam and Eve had before this time, agreeably to God's blessing, *Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth;* and many of these children might have children. The history of *Cain* before *Seth* was born, seems to imply, that there were great numbers of men on the earth: Gen. iv. 14, 15. *Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth: and from thy face shall I be hid, and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth: and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me. And the Lord said*

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unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him seven-fold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him. And all who existed when *Seth* was born, must be supposed to stand in equal capacity of multiplying their posterity with him; and therefore, *Seth's* posterity were but a small part of the inhabitants of the world.

But after the days of *Enos* and *Enoch*, (for *Enoch* was translated before *Enos* died) the church of God greatly diminished, in proportion as multitudes of the line of *Seth*, born in the church of God, fell away, and joined with the wicked world, principally by means of intermarriages with them; as Gen. vi. 1, 2, 4. *And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.—There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men, which were of old men of renown.* By the *sons of God* here, are doubtless meant the children of the church. It is a denomination often given them in scripture. They intermarried with the wicked world, and so had their hearts led away from God; and there was a great and continual defection from the church. The church, that used to be a restraint on the wicked world, diminished exceedingly, and so wickedness went on without restraint. Satan, that old serpent the devil, that tempted our first parents, and set up himself as the God of this world, raged exceedingly; and every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually, and the earth was filled with violence. It seemed to be deluged with wickedness then, as it was with water afterwards: and mankind in general were swallowed up in it. And now Satan made a most violent and potent attempt to devour the church of God; and had almost done it. But yet God restored it in the midst of all this flood of wickedness and violence. He kept it up in that line of which Christ was to proceed. He would not suffer it to be destroyed, for a blessing was in it. There was a particular family, a root whence the branch of righteousness was afterwards to shoot forth. And therefore, however the branches were lopped off, and the tree seemed to be destroyed, yet God, in the midst of all, kept alive this root, by his wonderful redeeming power and grace, so that the gates of hell could not prevail against it.

Thus I have shown how God carried on the great affair of redemption; how the building went on during this first period, from the fall of man, till God brought the flood on the earth. And I would observe, that though the Mosaic history

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during that space be very short; yet it is exceedingly comprehensive and instructive. And it may also be profitable for us here to observe, the efficacy of that purchase of redemption which had such great effects so many ages before Christ actually appeared.

PART II.

From the Flood to the Calling of Abraham.

I PROCEED now to show how the same work was carried on *from the beginning of the flood till the calling of Abraham.* For though that mighty universal deluge overthrew the world; yet it did not overthrow this building of God, the work of redemption. This went on; and instead of being overthrown, continued to be built up, in order to a further preparation for the great Saviour's coming into the world, for the redemption of his people.

I. The flood itself was a work of God that belonged to this great affair, and tended to promote it. All the mighty works of God, from the fall of man to the end of the world, are reducible to this work; and if seen in a right view, will appear as parts of it, and so many steps for carrying it on; and doubtless so great a work, so remarkable and universal a catastrophe, as the deluge was, cannot be excepted. Thereby God removed out of the way the enemies and obstacles that were ready to overthrow it.

Satan seems to have been in a dreadful rage just before the flood, and his rage then doubtless was, as it always has been, chiefly against the church of God to overthrow it; and he had filled the earth with violence and rage against it. He had drawn over almost all the world to be on his side, and they listed under his banner against Christ and his church. We read, that *the earth was filled with violence;* and doubtless that violence was chiefly against the church, in fulfilment of what was foretold, *I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed.* Their enmity and violence was so great, and the enemies of the church so numerous, the whole world being against it, that it was come to the last extremity. Noah's reproofs, and his preaching of righteousness, were utterly disregarded. God's spirit had striven with them an hundred and twenty years, but all in vain; and the church was reduced to so narrow limits, as to be confined to one family. Their was no prospect of any thing else but of their totally swallowing up the church, and

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that in a very little time; and so wholly destroying that small root that had the blessing in it, or whence the Redeemer was to proceed.

And, therefore, God's destroying those enemies of the church by the flood, belongs to this affair of redemption; for it was one thing that was done in fulfilment of the covenant of grace, as it was revealed to *Adam: I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head.* This was only a destruction of the seed of the serpent in the midst of their most violent rage against the seed of the woman, when in the utmost peril by them.

We read in scripture of scarce any destruction of nations but that one main reason given for it is, their enmity and injuries against God's church; and doubtless this was one main reason of the destruction of all nations by the flood. The giants that were in those days, in all likelihood, got themselves renown by their great exploits against heaven, and against Christ and his church, the remaining sons of God that had not corrupted themselves.

We read, that just before the world shall be destroyed by fire, *the nations that are in the four quarters of the earth, shall gather together against the church as the sand of the sea, and shall go upon the breadth of the earth, and compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and then fire shall come down from God out of heaven, and devour them,* Rev. xx. 8, 9. And it seems there was that which was very parallel to it, just before the world was destroyed by water. And therefore their destruction was a work of God that did as much belong to the work of redemption, as the destruction of the *Egyptians* belonged to the redemption of the children of Israel out of Egypt, or as the destruction of Sennacherib's mighty army, that had compassed about Jerusalem to destroy it, belonged to God's redemption of that city from them.

By means of this flood, all the enemies of God's church, against whom that little handful had no strength, were swept off at once. God took their part, appeared for them against their enemies, and drowned those of whom they had been afraid, in the flood of water, as he drowned the enemies of Israel that pursued them in the Red Sea.

Indeed God could have taken other methods to deliver his church: he could have converted all the world instead of drowning it; and so he could have taken another method than drowning the *Egyptians* in the Red Sea. But that is no argument, that the method he did take was not a method to show his redeeming mercy to them.

By the deluge, the enemies of God's people were dispossessed of the earth, and the whole earth was given to Noah and his family to possess it in quiet; as God made room for the

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Israelites in *Canaan*, by casting out their enemies from before them. And God thus taking the possession of the enemies of the church, and giving it all to his church, was agreeable to that promise of the covenant of grace, Ps. xxxvii. 9—11. *For evil doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*

II. Another thing belonging to the same work, was God's wonderfully preserving that family of which the Redeemer was to proceed, when all the rest of the world was drowned. God's drowning the world, and saving *Noah* and his family, were both reducible to this great work. The saving of *Noah* and his family belonged to it two ways, viz. as from that family the Redeemer was to proceed, and it was the mystical body of Christ that was there saved. The manner of saving those persons, when all the world besides was so overthrown, was very wonderful. It was a wonderful type of the redemption of Christ, of that redemption that is sealed by the baptism of water, and is so spoken of in the New Testament, as 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21. *Which sometimes were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* That water which washed away the filth of the world, that cleared the world of wicked men, was a type of the blood of Christ, that takes away the sin of the world. That water which delivered Noah and his sons from their enemies, is a type of the blood that delivers God's church from their sins, their worst enemies. That water which was so plentiful and abundant, that it filled the world, and reached above the tops of the highest mountains, was a type of that blood, which is sufficient for the whole world; sufficient to bury the highest mountains of sin. The ark, that was the refuge and hiding-place of the church in this time of storm and flood, was a type of Christ, the true hiding-place of the church from the storms and floods of God's wrath.

III. The next thing I would observe is, the *new grant* of the earth God made to Noah and his family immediately after the flood, as founded on the covenant of grace. The sacrifice of Christ was represented by Noah's building an altar to the Lord, and offering a sacrifice of every clean beast, and every clean fowl. And we have an account of God accepting this sacrifice: and thereupon he blessed Noah, and established his covenant with him, and with his seed, promising to destroy

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the earth in like manner no more; signifying that it is by the sacrifice of Christ, God's favour is obtained, and his people are in safety from destroying judgments, and obtain the blessing of the Lord. And God now, on occasion of this sacrifice that Noah offered, gives him and his posterity a new grant of the earth; a new power of dominion over the creatures, as founded on that sacrifice, and so founded on the covenant of grace. And so it is to be looked upon as a different grant from that which was made to Adam, Gen. i. 28. *And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.* That grant was not founded on the covenant of *grace;* for it was given to Adam while he was under the covenant of *works*, and therefore was antiquated when that covenant ceased. Hence it came to pass, that the earth was taken away from mankind by the flood: for the first grant was forfeited; and God had never made another after that, till after the flood. If the first covenant had not been broken, God never would have drowned the world, and so have taken it away from mankind; for then the first grant made to mankind would have stood good. But that being broken, God, after a while, destroyed the earth, when the wickedness of man was great.

But after the flood, on Noah's offering a sacrifice that represented the sacrifice of Christ, God, in smelling a sweet savour, or accepting the sacrifice—as it was a representation of the true sacrifice of Christ, which is a sweet savour indeed to God—gives Noah a new grant of the earth, founded on that covenant of grace which is by the sacrifice of Christ, with a promise annexed, that now the earth should no more be destroyed, till the consummation of all things; (Gen. viii. 20—22. and chap. ix. 1—3, 7.) The reason why such a promise, that God would no more destroy the earth, was added to this grant made to Noah, and not to that made to Adam, was because this was founded on the covenant of grace, of which Christ was the surety, and therefore could not be broken. And therefore it comes to pass now, that though the wickedness of man has dreadfully raged, and the earth has been filled with violence and wickedness, one age after another, and much more dreadful and aggravated wickedness, being against so much greater light and mercy; especially in these days of the gospel: yet God's patience holds out; God does not destroy the earth: his mercy and forbearance abide according to his promise; and his grant established with Noah and his sons abides firm and good, being founded on the covenant of grace.

IV. On this God renews with Noah and his sons the covenant of grace, Gen. ix. 9, 10. *And I, behold, I establish my*

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covenant with you, and with your seed after you, and with every living creature that is with you, &c.; which was the covenant of grace; of which even the brute creation have this benefit, that it shall never be destroyed again until the consummation of all things. By this expression in scripture, *my covenant*, is commonly to be understood the covenant of grace. The manner of expression, *I will establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you*, shows plainly that it was a covenant already in being, and that Noah would understand by that denomination the covenant of grace.

V. God's disappointing the design of building the city and tower of Babel belongs to the great work of redemption. For that was undertaken in opposition of this great building of God of which we are speaking. Men's going about to build such a city and tower, was an effect of the corruption into which mankind were now fallen. This city and tower was set up in opposition to the city of God, as the god to whom they built it was their pride. Being sunk into a disposition to forsake the true God, the first idol they set up in his room, was their own fame. And as this city and tower had their foundation laid in the pride and vanity of men, and the haughtiness of their minds, so it was built on a foundation exceedingly contrary to the nature of the kingdom of Christ, and his redeemed city, which has its foundation laid in humility.

Therefore God saw that it tended to frustrate the design of that great building which was founded in Christ's humiliation: and therefore the thing displeased the Lord, and he baffled and confounded the design. God will frustrate and confound all other designs, that are set up in opposition to the great work of redemption.

Isaiah, (chap. ii.) representing God setting up the kingdom of Christ in the world, foretels how, in order to it, he will bring down the haughtiness of men, and how the day of the Lord shall be on *every high tower*, and upon *every fenced wall*, &c. Christ's kingdom is established, by bringing down every high thing to make way for it, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. *For the weapons of our warfare are mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.* What is done in a particular soul, to make way for the setting up of Christ's kingdom, is to destroy Babel in that soul.

They intended to have built Babel up to heaven. However, that building of which we speak shall reach to heaven indeed, the highest heavens, at the end of the world, when it shall be finished; and therefore God would not suffer the building of his enemies, in opposition to it, to prosper. If they had prospered in building that city and tower, it might have

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kept the world of wicked men, the enemies of the church, together, as that was their design. They might have remained united in one vast, powerful city; and so have been too powerful for the city of God.

This Babel is the same with the city of Babylon; for Babylon in the original is Babel. But Babylon is always spoken of in scripture as chiefly opposite to the city of God, as a powerful and terrible enemy, notwithstanding this great check put to the building of it in the beginning. But it probably would have been vastly more powerful, and able to vex, if not to destroy the church of God, if it had not been thus checked.

Thus it was in kindness to his church, and in prosecution of the great design of redemption, that God put a stop to the building of the city and tower of Babel.

VI. The dispersing of the nations, and dividing the earth among its inhabitants, immediately after God had caused the building of Babel to cease. This was done so as most to suit the great design of redemption. And particularly, God therein had an eye to the future propagation of the gospel among the nations. They were so placed, their habitation so limited, round about the land of Canaan, as most suited that design. Deut. xxxii. 8. *When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.* Acts xvii. 26, 27. *And hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him.* The land of Canaan was the most conveniently situated of any place in the world, for the purpose of spreading revealed light among the nations in general. The Roman empire, the chief part of the civilized world, in the apostolic age, was in the countries round about Jerusalem. The devil seeing the advantage of this situation of the nations, for promoting the great work of redemption, and the disadvantage of it with respect to the interests of his kingdom, afterward led away many nations into the remotest parts of the world, to get them out of the way of the gospel. Thus he led some into America; and others into northern cold regions, that are almost inaccessible.

VII. Another thing I would mention in this period, was God's preserving the true religion in that line from which Christ was to proceed, when the world in general apostatized to idolatry, and the church was in imminent danger of being swallowed in the general corruption. Although God had lately wrought so wonderfully for the deliverance of his church, and had shewn so great mercy towards it,

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as for its sake even to destroy all the rest of the world; and although he had lately renewed and established his covenant of grace with Noah and his sons; yet so prone is the corrupt heart of man to depart from God, and to sink into the depths of wickedness, darkness, and delusion, that the world soon after the flood fell into gross idolatry; so that before Abraham the distemper was become almost universal. The earth was become very corrupt at the time of the building of Babel; even God's people themselves, that line of which Christ was to come. Josh. xxiv. 2. *Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terrah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor; and* THEY SERVED OTHER GODS. The other side of the flood means beyond the river Euphrates, where the ancestors of Abraham lived.

We are not to understand that they were *wholly* drawn off to idolatry, to forsake the true God. For God is said to be the God of Nahor: Gen. xxxi. 53. *The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us.* But they partook in some measure of the general and almost universal corruption of the times; as Solomon was in a measure infected with idolatrous corruption; and as the children of Israel in Egypt are said to serve other gods, though there was the true church of God among them; and as there were images kept for a considerable time in the family of Jacob; the corruption being brought from Padan-Aram, whence he fetched his wives.

This was the second time that the church was almost brought to nothing by the corruption and general defection of the world from true religion. But still the true religion was kept up in the family from which Christ was to proceed. Which is another instance of God's remarkably preserving his church in a time of a general deluge of wickedness; and wherein, although the god of this world raged, and had almost swallowed up God's church, yet he did not suffer the gates of hell to prevail against it.

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PART III.

From the Calling of Abraham to Moses.

I PROCEED now to show how the work of redemption was carried on from *the calling of Abraham to Moses.* And,

I. It pleased God now to separate that person of whom Christ was to come, from the rest of the world, that his church might be upheld in his family and posterity till that time. He called Abraham out of his own country, and from his kindred, to go into a distant country, that God should show him; and brought him first out of Ur of the Chaldees to Charran, and then to the land of Canaan.

It was before observed, that the idolatrous corruption of the world was now become general; mankind were almost wholly over-run with idolatry. God therefore saw it necessary, in order to uphold true religion in the world, that there should be a family separated from all others. It proved to be high time to take this course, lest the church of Christ should wholly be carried away with the apostacy. For Abraham's own country and kindred had most of them fallen off; and without some extraordinary interposition of Providence, in all likelihood, in a generation or two more, the true religion in this line would have been extinct. And therefore God called Abraham, the person in whose family he intended to uphold the true religion, out of his own country, and from his kindred, to a far distant country, that his posterity might there remain a people separate from all the rest of the world; that so the true religion might be upheld there, while all mankind besides were swallowed up in Heathenism.

The land of the Chaldees, whence Abraham was called, was the country about Babel. Babel, or Babylon, was the chief city of Chaldea. Learned men suppose, by what they gather from the most ancient accounts of things, that it was in this land idolatry first began; that Babel and Chaldea were the original and chief seats of the worship of idols, whence it spread into other nations. And therefore the land of the Chaldeans, the country of Babylon, is in scripture called *the land of graven images;* Jer. l. 35, 38. *A sword is upon the Chaldeans, saith the Lord, and upon the inhabitants of Babylon, and upon her princes, and upon her wise men. A drought is upon her waters, and they shall be dried up; for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols.* God calls Abraham out of this idolatrous country, to a great distance from it. And when he came there, he gave him no inheritance in it, no not so much as to set his foot on; but he remained a stranger and a

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sojourner, that he and his family might be kept separate from all the world.

This was a new thing; God had never taken such a method before. His church had not in this manner been separated from the rest of the world till now; but were wont to dwell with them, without any bar or fence to keep them separate; the mischievous consequence of which had been found once and again. Before the flood, the effect of God's people living intermingled with the wicked world, without any remarkable wall of separation, was, that the sons of the church joined in marriage with others, and thereby almost all soon became infected, and the church was almost brought to nothing. The method that God then took to fence the church was, to drown the wicked world, and save the church in the ark. Before Abraham was called, the world was become corrupt again. But now God took another method; he did not destroy the wicked world, and save Abraham, and his wife, and Lot, but calls these persons to go and live separate from the rest of the world.

This was a new and great thing, that God did toward the work of redemption. It was about the middle of the space of time between the fall of man and the coming of Christ; about two thousand years before the great Redeemer was to appear. But by this calling of Abraham, the ancestor of Christ, a foundation was laid for upholding the church in the world, till Christ should come. For the world having become idolatrous, there was a necessity in order to this, that the seed of the woman should be thus separated from it.

And then it was needful that there should be a particular nation separated from the rest of the world, to receive the types and prophecies that were to be given of Christ, to prepare the way for his coming; that to them might be committed the oracles of God; that by them the history of God's great works of creation and providence might be preserved; that Christ might be born of this nation; and that from hence the light of the gospel might shine forth to the rest of the world. These ends could not well be obtained, if God's people, through all these two thousand years, had lived intermixed with the heathen world. So that the calling of Abraham may be looked upon as a kind of new foundation laid for the visible church of God, in a more distinct and regular state. Abraham, being the person in whom this foundation is laid, is represented in scripture as though he were the father of all the church, the father of all them that believe; a root whence the visible church rose as a tree, distinct from all other plants. Of this tree Christ was the branch of righteousness; and from it, after Christ came, the natural branches were broken off, and the Gentiles were grafted in. So that Abraham still remains

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the father, the root of the church. It is the same tree which, from that small beginning in Abraham's time, has in these days of the gospel spread its branches over a great part of the earth, and will fill the whole in due time, and at the end of the world shall be transplanted from an earthly soil into the paradise of God.

II. There accompanied this a more particular and full revelation and confirmation of the covenant of grace than ever before. There had been before this two particular and solemn editions or confirmations of this covenant; one, to our first parents, soon after the fall; the other to Noah and his family, soon after the flood. And now there is a third, at and after the calling of Abraham. It was now revealed to Abraham, not only that Christ should come; but that he should be his seed; and promised, that all the families of the earth should be blessed in him. And God repeated the promises of this to Abraham. The first promise was when he first called him, Gen. xii. 2. *And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.* The same promise was renewed after he came into the land of Canaan, (chap. xiii. 14, &c.) Again after Abraham had returned from the slaughter of the kings, (chap. xv. 5, 6.) And a fourth time, after his offering up Isaac, (chap. xxii. 16—18.)

In this renewal of the covenant of grace with Abraham, several particulars concerning it were revealed more fully than before; not only that Christ was to be of Abraham's seed, but also, the calling of the Gentiles, that all nations should be brought into the church, all the families of the earth made blessed. And then the great condition of the covenant of grace, which is faith, was now more fully made known. Gen. xv. 5, 6. *And he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.* Which is much noticed in the New Testament, as that for which Abraham was called the father of believers.

And as there was now a further revelation of the covenant of grace, so there was a further confirmation of it by seals and pledges; particularly, circumcision, which was a seal of the covenant of grace, as appears by the first institution of it, Gen. xvii. It there appears to be a seal of that covenant by which God promised to make Abraham a father of many nations, (ver. 5, 9, 10.) And we are expressly taught, that it was *a seal of the righteousness of faith*, Rom. iv. 11. Speaking of Abraham, the apostle says, *he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith.*

Abraham's family and posterity must be kept separate from the rest of the world, till Christ should come; and this sacrament was the principal wall of separation. Besides, God

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gave Abraham a remarkable pledge of the fulfilment of the promise he had made him, in his victory over Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him. Chedorlaomer seems to have been a great emperor, who reigned over a great part of the world at that day; and though he had his seat at Elam, which was not much if any thing short of a thousand miles distant from the land of Canaan, yet he extended his empire so as to reign over many parts of the land of Canaan, as appears by chap. xiv. 4, 5, 6, 7. It is supposed by learned men, that he was a king of the Assyrian empire at that day, which had been before begun by Nimrod at Babel. And as it was the honour of kings in those days to build cities for the seat of their empire, (Gen. x. 10—12,) so it is conjectured, that he had gone forth and built him a city in Elam, and made that his seat; and that those other kings who came with him, were his deputies in the several cities and countries where they reigned. But yet, as mighty an empire as he had, and as great an army as he came with, Abraham, only with his trained servants, that were born in his house, conquered and subdued this mighty emperor, the kings that came with him, and all their army. This he received of God as a pledge of what he had promised, viz. the victory that Christ his seed should obtain over the nations of the earth, whereby he should possess the gates of his enemies. It is plainly spoken of as such in the 41st of Isaiah. In that chapter is foretold the future glorious victory the church shall obtain over the nations of the world, (ver. 1, 10, 15.) This victory of Abraham over such a great emperor and his mighty forces, is spoken of as a pledge and earnest of victory to the church, (ver. 2, 3.) *Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? He gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow. He pursued them, and passed safely; even by the way that he had not gone with his feet.*

Another remarkable confirmation Abraham received of the covenant of grace, was when he returned from the slaughter of the kings; when Melchizedec the king of Salem, the priest of the most high God, that great type of Christ, met him, and blessed him, and brought forth bread and wine. The bread and wine signified the same blessings of the covenant of grace, that the bread and wine does in the sacrament of the Lord's supper. As Abraham had a seal of the covenant in circumcision that was equivalent to baptism, so now he had a seal of it equivalent to the Lord's supper. And Melchizedec's coming to meet him with such a seal of the covenant of grace, on the occasion of this victory, evinces that it was a pledge of God's fulfilment of the same covenant. (Gen. xiv. 19, 20.)

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Another confirmation of the covenant of grace, was the vision he had, in the deep sleep that fell upon him, of the smoking furnace, and burning lamp, that passed between the parts of the sacrifice, (Gen. xv.) The sacrifice signified that of Christ. The smoking furnace that passed through the midst of that sacrifice first, signified the sufferings of Christ. But the burning lamp that followed, which shone with a clear bright light, signifies the glory that followed Christ's sufferings, and was procured by them.

Another remarkable pledge that God gave Abraham of the fulfilment of the covenant of grace, was his giving of that child of whom Christ was to come, in his old age; (Heb. xi. 11, 12. and Rom. iv. 18, &c.) and his delivering Isaac, after he was laid upon the wood of the sacrifice to be slain. This was a confirmation of Abraham's faith in the promise that God had made of Christ, that he should be of Isaac's posterity; and was a representation of the resurrection of Christ. (Heb. xi. 17—19.) And because this was given as a confirmation of the covenant of grace, therefore God renewed that covenant with Abraham on this occasion, (Gen. xxiv. 15, &c.)

Thus you see how much more fully the covenant of grace was revealed and confirmed in Abraham's time than ever it had been before; by means of which Abraham seems to have had a clear view of Christ the great Redeemer, and the future things that were to be accomplished by him. And therefore Christ informs us, that *Abraham rejoiced to see his day, and he saw it, and was glad*, John viii. 56. So great an advance did it please God now to make in this building, which he had been carrying on from the beginning of the world.

III. The next thing is God's preserving the patriarchs for so long a time in the midst of the wicked inhabitants of Canaan, and from all other enemies. The patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were those of whom Christ was to proceed; and they were now separated from the world, that in them his church might be upheld. Therefore, in preserving them, the great design of redemption was carried on. He preserved them, and kept the inhabitants of the land where they sojourned from destroying them; which was a remarkable dispensation of Providence. For the inhabitants of the land were at that day very wicked, though they grew more wicked afterwards. This appears by Gen. xv. 16. *In the fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Canaanites is not yet full:* As much as to say, Though it be very great, yet it is not yet full. And their great wickedness also appears by Abraham and Isaac's aversion to their children marrying any of the daughters of the land. Abraham, when he was old, could not be content till he had made his servant swear that he would not take a wife for his son of the daughters

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of the land. And Isaac and Rebecca were content to send away Jacob to so great a distance as Padan-Aram, to take him a wife thence. And when Esau married some of the daughters of the land, we are told, that they were *a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebecca.*

Another argument of their great wickedness, was the instances we have in Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which were some of the cities of Canaan, though they were probably most notoriously wicked; and likely to have the most bitter enmity against these holy men; agreeable to what was declared at first, *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.* Their holy lives were a continual condemnation of their wickedness. Besides, it could not be otherwise, but that they must be much in reproving their wickedness, as we find Lot was in Sodom; who, we are told, vexed his righteous soul with their unlawful deeds, and was to them a preacher of righteousness.

And they were the more exposed to them, being strangers and sojourners in the land, and having as yet no inheritance there. Men are more apt to find fault with strangers, and to be irritated by any thing in them that offends, as they were with Lot in Sodom. He very gently reproved their wickedness; and they say upon it, *This fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a ruler and a judge;* and threatened what they would do to him.

But God wonderfully preserved Abraham and Lot, Isaac and Jacob, and their families, amongst them, though they were few in number, and they might quickly have destroyed them; which is taken notice of as a wonderful instance of God's preserving mercy towards his church, Psal. cv. 12, &c. *When they were but a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it. When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people. He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproved kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.*

This preservation was, in some instances especially, very remarkable; when the people of the land were greatly irritated and provoked; as they were by Simeon and Levi's treatment of the Shechemites, in Gen. xxxiv. 30, &c. God then strangely preserved Jacob and his family, restraining the provoked people by an unusual terror on their minds, Gen. xxxv. 5. *And the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.*

And God preserved them not only from the Canaanites, but from all others that intended mischief to them. He preserved Jacob and his company, when pursued by Laban, full of rage, and a disposition to overtake him as an enemy.

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God met him, rebuked him, and said to him, *Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob, either good or bad.* How wonderfully did he also preserve him from Esau his brother, when he came forth with an army, with a full design to cut him off! How did God, in answer to his prayer, when Jacob wrestled with Christ at Penuel, wonderfully turn Esau's heart, and make him, instead of meeting him as an enemy with slaughter and destruction, to meet him as a friend and brother, doing him no harm!

And thus was this handful, this little root that had the blessing of the Redeemer in it, preserved in the midst of enemies and dangers; which was not unlike to preserving the ark in the midst of the tempestuous deluge.

IV. The next thing I would mention is the awful destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbouring cities. This tended to promote the great work designed two ways: First, as it tended powerfully to restrain the inhabitants of the land from injuring those holy strangers that God had brought to sojourn amongst them. Lot was one of those strangers; he came into the land with Abraham; and Sodom was destroyed for their abusive disregard of Lot, the preacher of righteousness. And their destruction came upon their committing a most injurious and abominable insult on Lot, and the strangers that were come into his house, even those angels, whom they probably took to be some of Lot's former acquaintance come to visit him. They in a most outrageous manner beset Lot's house, intending a monstrous abuse and act of violence on those strangers, and threatening to serve Lot worse than them.

But in the midst of this God smote them with blindness; and the next morning the city and the country about it was overthrown in a most terrible storm of fire and brimstone; which dreadful destruction, as it was in the sight of the rest of the inhabitants of the land, and therefore greatly tended to restrain them from hurting those holy strangers any more; it doubtless struck a dread and terror on their minds, and made them afraid to hurt them, and probably was one principal means to restrain them, and preserve the patriarchs. And when that reason is given, why the inhabitants of the land did not pursue after Jacob, when they were so provoked by the destruction of the Shechemites, viz. *that the terror of the Lord was upon them;* it is very probable, that this was the terror which was set home upon them. They remembered the amazing destruction of Sodom, and the cities of the plain, that came upon them for their abusive treatment of Lot, and so durst not hurt Jacob and his family, though they were so much provoked to it.

Another way that this awful destruction tended to promote this great affair of redemption, was, that hereby God remark-

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ably exhibited the terrors of his law, to make men sensible of their need of redeeming mercy. The work of redemption never was carried on without this. The law, from the beginning, is made use of as a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ.

But under the Old Testament there was much more need of some extraordinary, visible, and sensible manifestation of God's wrath against sin, than in the days of the gospel; since a future state, and the eternal misery of hell, is more clearly revealed, and since the awful justice of God against the sins of men has been so wonderfully displayed in the sufferings of Christ. And therefore the revelation that God gave of himself in those days, used to be accompanied with much more terror than it is in these days of the gospel. So when God appeared at Mount Sinai to give the law, it was with thunders and lightning, and a thick cloud, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud. Some external, awful manifestations of God's wrath against sin were on some accounts especially necessary before the giving of the law: and therefore, before the flood, the terrors of the law handed down by tradition from Adam served for that purpose. Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years himself, to proclaim God's awful threatenings denounced in the covenant made with him, and how dreadful the consequences of the fall were; and others, that conversed with Adam, lived till the flood. And the destruction of the world by the flood served to exhibit the terrors of the law, and manifested the wrath of God against sin; in order to make men sensible of the absolute necessity of redeeming mercy. And some that saw the flood were alive in Abraham's time.

But this was now in a great measure forgotten; therefore God was pleased again, in a most amazing manner, to show his wrath against sin, in the destruction of these cities; which was the liveliest image of hell of any thing that ever had been; and therefore the apostle Jude says, *They suffer the vengeance of eternal fire*, Jude 7. God rained storms of fire and brimstone upon them; probably by thick flashes of lightning. The streams of brimstone burnt up all these cities; so that they perished in the flames of divine wrath. By this might be seen the dreadful wrath of God against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; which tended to show the necessity of redemption, and so to promote that great work.

V. God again renewed and confirmed the covenant of grace to Isaac and to Jacob. To Isaac in these words; Gen. xxvi. 3, 4. *And I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.* And afterwards to Jacob; first, in Isaac blessing him and his seed, wherein he acted and spoke by extraordinary

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divine direction, Gen. xxvii. 29. *Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee; be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee; Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.* And therefore Esau, not included in this blessing, missed of being blessed as an heir of the benefits of the covenant of grace.

This covenant was again renewed and confirmed to Jacob at Bethel, in his vision of the ladder that reached to heaven; which was a symbol of the way of salvation by Christ. The stone that Jacob rested on was a type of Christ, the stone of Israel, which the spiritual Israel rests upon; as is evident, because it was anointed, and made use of as an altar. But we know that Christ is the anointed of God, and is the only true altar. While Jacob was resting on this stone, and saw this ladder, God appears to him as his covenant God, and renews the covenant of grace with him; as in Gen. xxviii. 14. *And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*

Jacob had another remarkable confirmation of this covenant at Penuel, where he wrestled with God, and prevailed; where Christ appeared to him in the form of that nature which he was afterwards to receive into a personal union with his divine nature.—And God renewed his covenant with him again, after he left Padan-Aram, and was come up to Bethel, and where he had the vision of the ladder; as you may see in Gen. xxxv. 10, &c.

Thus the covenant of grace was now renewed much oftener than it had been before. The light of the gospel now began to shine much brighter, as the time of Christ's appearing drew nearer.

VI. The next thing I would observe, is God's remarkably preserving the family of which Christ was to proceed from perishing by famine, by the instrumentality of Joseph. When there was a seven years' famine approaching, God was pleased, by a wonderful providence, to send Joseph into Egypt, there to provide for Jacob and his family, and to keep the holy seed alive, which otherwise would have perished. Joseph was sent into Egypt for that end, as he observes, Gen. l. 20. *But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to save much people alive.* How often had this holy root, that had in it the future branch of righteousness, the glorious Redeemer, been in danger of being destroyed! But God wonderfully preserved it.

This salvation of the house of Israel, by the hand of Joseph, was upon some accounts very much a resemblance of the salvation of Christ. The children of Israel were saved by

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Joseph their kinsman and brother, from perishing by famine; as he that saves the souls of the spiritual Israel from spiritual famine is their near kinsman, and one that is not ashamed to call them brethren. Joseph was a brother they had hated, sold, and as it were killed; for they had designed to kill him. So Christ is one that we naturally hate, and by our wicked lives, have sold for the vain things of the world, and by our sins have slain. Joseph was first in a state of humiliation; he was a servant, as Christ appeared in the form of a servant; and then was cast into a dungeon, as Christ descended into the grave. When he rose out of the dungeon, he was in a state of great exaltation, at the king's right hand as his deputy, to reign over all his kingdom, to provide food, to preserve life; and being in this state of exaltation, he dispenses food to his brethren, and so gives them life. So Christ was exalted at God's right hand to be a Prince and Saviour to his brethren, received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, them that had hated and sold him.

VII After this there was a prophecy of Christ, on some accounts more particular than any before, in Jacob's blessing his son Judah. This was more particular as it showed of whose posterity he was to be. When God called Abraham, it was revealed that he was to be of Abraham's posterity. Before, we have no account of any revelation concerning Christ's pedigree confined to narrower limits than the posterity of Noah: after this it was confined to still narrower limits; for though Abraham had many sons, yet it was revealed, that Christ was to be of Isaac's posterity. And then it was limited still more; for when Isaac had two sons, it was revealed that Christ was to be of Israel's posterity. And now, though Israel had twelve sons, yet it is revealed that Christ should be of Judah's posterity. Christ is the lion of the tribe of Judah. Respect is chiefly had to his great acts, when it is said here, Gen. xlix. 8. *Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?* And then this prediction is more particular concerning the time of Christ's coming, as in verse 10. *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.* The prophecy here, of the calling of the Gentiles consequent on Christ's coming, seems to be more plain than any had been before, in the expression, *to him shall the gathering of the people be.* Thus you see how that gospel light which dawned immediately after the fall of man, gradually increases.

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VIII. The work of redemption was carried on in this period, in God's wonderfully preserving the children of Israel in Egypt, when the power of Egypt was engaged utterly to destroy them. They seemed to be wholly in the hands of the Egyptians; they were their servants, and were subject to the power of Pharaoh: and Pharaoh set himself to weaken them with hard bondage. And when he saw that did not do, he set himself to extirpate their race, by commanding that every male child should be drowned. But after all that Pharaoh could do, God wonderfully preserved them; and not only so, but increased them exceedingly; so that, instead of being extirpated, they greatly multiplied.

IX. Here is to be observed, not only the preservation of the nation, but God's wonderfully preserving and upholding his invisible church in that nation, when in danger of being overwhelmed in the idolatry of Egypt. The children of Israel being long among the Egyptians, and servants under them, and so not having advantages to keep God's ordinances among themselves, and maintain any public worship or instruction, whereby the true religion might be upheld; and there being now no written word, they by degrees, in a great measure, lost the true religion, and borrowed the idolatry of Egypt; and the greater part of the people fell away to the worship of their gods. This we learn by Ezek. xx. 6, 7, 8. and by chap. xxiii. 8.

This now was the third time that God's church was almost swallowed up and carried away with the wickedness of the world; once before the flood; the other time, before the calling of Abraham; and now, the third time, in Egypt. But yet God did not suffer his church to be quite overwhelmed: he still saved it, like the ark in the flood, and as he saved Moses in the midst of the waters, in an ark of bulrushes, where he was in the utmost danger of being swallowed up. The true religion was still kept up with some; and God had still a people among them, even in this miserable, corrupt, and dark time. The parents of Moses were true servants of God, as we may learn, by Heb. xi. 23. *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw that he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.*

I have now shown how the work of redemption was carried on from the calling of Abraham to Moses; in which we have seen many great things done towards this work, and a great advancement of this building, beyond what had preceded.

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PART IV.

From Moses to David.

I PROCEED to the time which reaches from Moses to David.

I. The first thing that offers itself is the redemption of the church of God out of Egypt; the most remarkable of all in the Old Testament, the greatest pledge and forerunner of the future redemption by Christ, and much more insisted on in scripture than any other of those redemptions. And indeed it was the greatest type of Christ's redemption of any providential event whatsoever. This was by Jesus Christ, for it was wrought by him who appeared to Moses in the bush; the person that sent Moses to redeem that people. But that was Christ, as is evident, because he is called *the angel of the Lord,* Exod. iii. 2, 3. The bush represented the human nature of Christ, who is called the *branch.* This bush grew on Mount Sinai or Horeb, a word that signifies a dry place, as the human nature of Christ was a root out of a dry ground. The bush burning with fire, represented the sufferings of Christ, in the fire of God's wrath. It burned, and was not consumed; so Christ, though he suffered extremely, yet perished not; but overcame at last, and rose from his sufferings. Because this great mystery of the incarnation and sufferings of Christ was here represented, therefore Moses says, *I will turn aside, and behold this great sight.* A great sight he might well call it, when there was represented, *God manifest in the flesh,* suffering a dreadful death, and rising from the dead.

This was the glorious Redeemer who redeemed the church out of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh; as Christ, by his death and sufferings, redeemed his people from Satan, the spiritual Pharaoh. He redeemed them from hard service and cruel drudgery; so Christ redeems his people from the cruel slavery of sin and Satan. He redeemed them, as it is said, *from the iron furnace;* so Christ redeems his church from a furnace of fire and everlasting burnings.—He redeemed them with a strong hand and out-stretched arm, and great and terrible judgments on their enemies; so Christ with mighty power triumphs over *principalities and powers,* and executes terrible judgments on his church's enemies, bruising the serpent's head. He saved them when others were destroyed, by the sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb; so God's church is saved from death by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, when the rest of the world is

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destroyed. God brought forth the people sorely against the will of the Egyptians, when they could not bear to let them go; so Christ rescues his people out of the hands of the devil, sorely against his will, when his proud heart cannot bear to be overcome.

In that redemption, Christ did not only redeem the people from the Egyptians, but he redeemed them from the devils, the gods of Egypt; for before they had been in a state of servitude to the gods of Egypt, as well as to the men. And Christ, the seed of the woman, did now, in a very remarkable manner, fulfil the curse on the serpent, in bruising his head: Exod. xiii. 12. *For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt will I execute judgment.* Hell was as much, nay more engaged in that affair, than Egypt was. The pride and cruelty of Satan, that old serpent, was more concerned in it than Pharaoh's. He did his utmost against the people, and to his utmost opposed their redemption. But it is said, that when God redeemed his people out of Egypt, he *broke the heads of the dragons in the waters, and broke the head of Leviathan in pieces, and gave him to be meat for the people inhabiting the wilderness,* Psalm lxxiv. 12—14. God forced their enemies to let them go, that they might serve him; as Zacharias observes with respect to the church under the gospel, Luke i. 74, 75.

The people of Israel went out with a high hand, and Christ went before them in a pillar of cloud and fire. There was a glorious triumph over earth and hell in that deliverance. When Pharaoh and his hosts, and Satan by them, pursued the people, Christ overthrew them in the Red Sea; the Lord triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he cast into the sea, and there they slept their sleep, and never followed the children of Israel any more. The Red Sea represented Christ's blood, because the apostle compares the children of Israel's passage through the Red Sea to baptism, 1 Cor. x. 1, 2.—But we all know that the water of baptism represents Christ's blood.

Thus Christ, the angel of God's presence, in his love and his pity, redeemed his people, and carried them in the days of old as on eagle's wings, so that none of their proud and spiteful enemies, neither Egyptians nor devils, could touch them.

This was quite a new thing that God did towards this great work of redemption. God never had done any thing like it before; Deut. iv. 32, 34. This was a great advancement of the work, that had been begun and carried on from the fall of man; a great step taken in divine providence to-

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wards a preparation for Christ's coming into the world, and working out his great and eternal redemption; for this was the people of whom Christ was to come. And now we may see how that plant flourished which God had planted in Abraham. Though the family of which Christ was to come, had been in a degree separated from the rest of the world before, in the calling of Abraham; yet that separation appeared not to be sufficient. For though by that separation, they were kept, as strangers and sojourners, from being united with other people in the same political societies; yet they remained mixed among them, by which means they had been in danger of wholly losing the true religion, and of being over-run with the idolatry of their neighbours. God now, therefore, by this redemption, separated them as a nation from all others, to subsist by themselves in their own political and ecclesiastical state, without having any concern with the Heathen nations, that the church of Christ might be upheld, and might keep the oracles of God; that in them might be kept up those types and prophecies of Christ, and those histories and other divine previous instructions, which were necessary to prepare the way for Christ's coming.

II. As this people were separated to be God's peculiar people, so all other people upon the face of the whole earth were wholly rejected and given over to Heathenism. This was one thing that God ordered in his providence to prepare the way for Christ's coming, and the great salvation he was to accomplish; for it was only to prepare the way for the more glorious and signal victory and triumph of Christ's power and grace over the wicked and miserable world, and that Christ's salvation of mankind might become the more sensible. This is the account the scripture itself gives us of the matter, Rom. xi. 30, 32. The apostle, speaking to the Gentiles that had formerly been Heathens, says, *As ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they may also obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all: i. e.* It was the will of God, that the whole world, Jews and Gentiles, should be concluded in visible and professed unbelief, that so God's mercy and Christ's salvation towards them all might be visible. For the apostle is not speaking only of that unbelief that is natural to all God's professing people as well as others, but that which appears, and is visible; such as the Jews fell into, when they openly rejected Christ, and ceased to be a professing people. The apostle observes, how that first the Gentiles, even the Gentile nations, were included in a professed unbelief and open opposition to the true religion, before Christ came to prepare the way for the calling of the

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Gentiles, which was soon after Christ came, in order that God's mercy might be the more visible to them; and that the Jews were rejected, and apostatized from the visible church, to prepare the way for the calling of the Jews, which shall be in the latter days. So that it may be seen concerning all nations, Jews and Gentiles, that are redeemed by Christ, from being visibly aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, without hope, and without God in the world.

We cannot certainly determine precisely at what time the apostacy of the Gentile nations from the true God, or their being concluded in visible unbelief, became universal. Their falling away was a gradual thing, as we observed before. It was general in Abraham's time, but not universal: for then we find Melchizedec, one of the king's of Canaan, was priest of the most high God. And after this the true religion was kept up for a while among some of the rest of Abraham's posterity, besides the family of Jacob; and also in some of the posterity of Nahor, as we have instances in Job, and his three friends, and Elihu. The land of Uz, where Job lived, was possessed by the posterity of Uz, or Huz, the son of Nahor, Abraham's brother, of whom we read, Gen. xxii. 21. Bildad the Shuhite was of the offspring of Shuah, Abraham's son by Keturah, Gen. xxv. 1, 2; and Elihu the Buzite, was of Buz the son of Nahor, the brother of Abraham. So the true religion lasted among some other people, besides the Israelites, a while after Abraham. But it did not last long: and it is probable that their total rejection, and giving up to idolatry, was about the time when God separated the children of Israel from Egypt to serve him. For they are often put in mind on that occasion, that God had now separated them to be his peculiar people; or to be distinguished from all other people upon earth, to be his people alone; to be his portion, when others were rejected. This seems to imply, that God now chose them in such a manner as was accompanied with a visible rejection of all other nations in the world; that God visibly came, and took up his residence with them, forsaking all other nations. As the first calling of the Gentiles, after Christ came, was accompanied with a rejection of the Jews; so the first calling of the Jews to be God's people, when they left Egypt, was accompanied with a rejection of the Gentiles.

Thus all the nations in the world, except the Israelites, and those who embodied themselves with them, were given up to idolatry; and so continued till Christ came, which was about fifteen hundred years. They were concluded so long a time in unbelief, that there might be a thorough proof of the necessity of a Saviour; that it might appear by so long a trial, past all contradiction, that mankind were utterly insufficient to deliver themselves from that gross darkness and misery, and

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subjection to the devil; that all the wisdom of the heathen philosophers, could not deliver them from their darkness, for the greater glory to Jesus Christ, who, when he came, enlightened and delivered them by his glorious gospel. Herein the wonderful wisdom of God appeared, in thus preparing the way for Christ's redemption. This the scripture teaches us, 1 Cor. i. 21. *For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*

III. The next thing done towards the work of redemption, is God's giving the moral law in so awful a manner at Mount Sinai. This was another new step taken in this great affair. Deut. iv. 33. *Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?* And it was a great thing, whether we consider it as a new exhibition of the covenant of works, or given as a rule of life.

The covenant of works was here exhibited as a schoolmaster to lead to Christ, not only for the use of that nation, under the Old Testament, but for the use of God's church throughout all ages of the world. It is an instrument that the great Redeemer makes use of to convince men of their sin, misery, and helpless state, and of God's awful and tremendous majesty and justice as a lawgiver, in order to make men sensible of the necessity of Christ as a Saviour. This work of redemption, in its saving effect on men's souls, in all its progress, is not carried on without the use of this law delivered at Sinai.

It was given in an awful manner, with a terrible voice, exceedingly loud and awful, so that all the people in the camp trembled; and even Moses himself, though so intimate a friend of God, said, *I exceedingly fear and quake.* The voice was accompanied with thunders and lightnings, the mountain burning with fire to the midst of heaven, and the earth itself shaking and trembling. This was done in order to make all sensible how great that authority, power, and justice were, that stood engaged to exact the fulfilment of this law, and to see it fully executed. Here might be understood, how strictly God would require the fulfilment; and how terrible his wrath would be against every transgressor. Men, being sensible of these things, might thoroughly prove their own hearts, and know how impossible it is for them to obtain salvation by the works of the law, and be assured of their absolute need of a mediator.

If we regard the law given at Mount Sinai—not as a covenant of works, but—as a rule of life, it is employed by the Redeemer, from that time to the end of the world, as a directory to his people, to show them the way in which they must walk, as they would go to heaven: for a way of sincere

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and universal obedience to this law is the narrow way that leads to life.

IV. The next thing observable in this period, was God's giving the *typical* law, those precepts that did not properly belong to the *moral* law. Not only those laws which are commonly called *ceremonial*, which prescribe the ceremonies and circumstances of the Jewish worship, and their ecclesiastical state; but also those that were political, for regulating the Jewish commonwealth, commonly called *judicial* laws, were many of them typical. The giving this typical law was another great thing that God did in this period, tending to build up the glorious structure of redemption. There had been many typical events of providence before, that represented Christ and his redemption, and some typical ordinances, as particularly those two of sacrifices and circumcision: but now, instead of representing the great Redeemer in a few institutions, God enacts a law full of typical representations of good things to come. By these, that nation were directed every year, month, and day, in their religious actions, and in their conduct, in all that appertained to their ecclesiastical and civil state, to something of Christ; one observance exhibiting one doctrine, or one benefit; another, another; so that the whole nation by this law was, as it were, constituted in a typical state. Thus the gospel was abundantly held forth to that nation; so that there is scarce any doctrine of it, but is particularly taught and exhibited by some observance of this law; though it was in shadows, and under a vail, as Moses put a vail on his face when it shone.—To this typical law belong all the precepts which relate to building the tabernacle, set up in the wilderness, and all its form, circumstances, and utensils.

V. About this time was given to the church the first written word of God. This was another great thing done towards the affair of redemption, a new and glorious advancement of the building; which God has given for the regulation of faith, worship, and practice, to the end of the world. This rule grew, and was added to from that time, for many ages, till it was finished, and the canon of scripture completed by the apostle John. It is not very material, whether the first written word was the ten commandments, written on the tables of stone with the finger of God, or the book of Job; and whether the book of Job was written by Moses, as some suppose, or by Elihu, as others. If it was written by Elihu, it must have been before this period; but yet could not be far from it, as appears by considering whose posterity the persons spoken of in it were, together with Job's great age, before it was written.

The written word of God is the main instrument employed

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by Christ, in order to carry on his work of redemption in all ages. There was a necessity now of the word of God being committed to writing, for a steady rule to God's church. Before this, the church had the word by tradition, either by immediate tradition from eminent men inspired, that were living, or else by tradition from former generations, which might be had with tolerable certainty in ages preceding this, by reason of men's long lives. Noah might converse with Adam, and receive traditions from him; and Noah lived till about Abraham's time: and the sons of Jacob lived a considerable time to deliver the revelations made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to their posterity in Egypt. But the distance from the beginning of things was become now so great, and the lives of men become so short—being brought down to the present standard about the time of Moses—and God having now separated a nation to be a peculiar people, to be the keepers of the oracles of God; God saw it to be a convenient time now to commit his word to writing, to remain henceforward for a steady rule throughout all ages. And therefore, besides the book of Job, Christ wrote the ten commandments on tables of stone, with his own finger. After this, the whole law, as containing the substance of the five books of Moses, was by God's special command committed to writing, which was called "the book of the law," and was laid up in the tabernacle, to be kept there for the use of the church, Deut. xxxi. 24—26.

VI. God was pleased now wonderfully to represent the progress of his redeemed church through the world to their eternal inheritance, by the journey of the children of Israel through the wilderness, from Egypt to Canaan. Here all the various steps of the redemption of the church by Christ were represented, from the beginning to its consummation in glory. The state they are redeemed from is represented by Egypt, and their bondage there, which they left. The purchase of their redemption was represented by the sacrifice of the paschal lamb, which was offered up that night in which God slew all the first-born of Egypt. The beginning of the application of the redemption of Christ's church in their conversion, was represented by Israel's going out of Egypt, and passing through the Red Sea in so extraordinary and miraculous a manner. The travel of the church through this evil world, and the various changes through which the church passes, was represented by the journey of the Israelites through the wilderness. The manner of their being conducted by Christ, was represented by the Israelites being led by the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night. The manner of the church's being supported in their progress, supplied with spiritual food, and daily communica-

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tions from God, was represented by his supplying the children of Israel with *manna* from heaven, and water out of the rock. The dangers that the saints must meet with in their course through the world, were represented by the fiery flying serpents in the wilderness. The conflicts the church has with her enemies, were represented by their battle with the Amalekites and others. And innumerable other particulars might be mentioned, which were lively images of what the church and saints meet with in all ages of the world. That these things were typical, is manifest from 1 Cor. x. 11. *Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.* Here the apostle is speaking of those very things which we have now mentioned, and he says expressly, that they happened unto them for *types;* so it is in the original.

VII. Another thing here must not be omitted, which was a great and remarkable dispensation of Providence, respecting the whole world of mankind, in this period; viz, the shortening of man's life. It was now brought down from being between nine hundred and a thousand years, to about seventy or eighty. The life of man began to be shortened immediately after the flood. It was brought down the first generation to six hundred years, and the next to between four and five hundred years. So the life of man gradually grew shorter and shorter, till about the time of the great mortality which was in the congregation of Israel, after they had murmured at the report of the spies, and their carcases fell in the wilderness, whereby all the men of war died. Then the life of man was reduced to its present standard, as Moses observes in that psalm which he wrote on occasion of that mortality: Psalm xc. 10. *The days of our years are three score years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.*

Man's life being cut so very short, tended to prepare the way for poor, short-lived men, the more joyfully to entertain the glad tidings of everlasting life, *brought to light by the gospel;* and more readily to embrace a Saviour, that purchases and offers such a blessing. If men's lives were still commonly about nine hundred years, how much less would be the inducement to regard the proffers of a future life; how much greater the temptation to rest in the things of this world, and to neglect any other life but this? This probably contributed greatly to the wickedness of the antedeluvians. But now how much greater motives have men to seek redemption, and a better life than this, by the great Redeemer, since the life of man is not one twelfth part of what it used to be, and

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men now universally die at the age when formerly they used to be but setting out in the world.

VIII. The same work was carried on in preserving that people of whom Christ was to come, from totally perishing in the wilderness, by a constant miracle of forty years' continuance. I observed before how God preserved those of whom the Redeemer was to proceed in a very wonderful manner; as Noah and his family from the flood; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with their families, from the wicked inhabitants of Canaan; and Jacob and his family from perishing by the famine, by Joseph in Egypt. But this preservation of Israel in the wilderness, was on some accounts more remarkable than any of them; for it was by a continual miracle of so long duration. There was, as may be fairly computed, at first two millions of souls in that congregation. But if miraculous support had been withheld, they must all have perished, in less than a month's time, so that there would not have been one of them left. But yet this vast multitude subsisted for forty years together, in a dry barren wilderness, without sowing, reaping, or tillage. Their bread was daily rained down to them out of heaven, and they were furnished with water out of a rock; and the same clothes with which they came out of Egypt, lasted all that time. Never was any instance like this, of a nation being so upheld for so long a time together. Thus God upheld his church by a continual miracle, and kept alive that people in whom was the blessing, the great Redeemer of the world.

IX. God was pleased, during this time, to give a further revelation of Christ the Redeemer in the predictions of him. Three prophecies deserve particular notice. The first is that of Balaam, Numb. xxiv. 17—19. *I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies, and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.* This is a plainer prophecy of Christ, especially with regard to his kingly office, than any former one. But we have another, that God gave by Moses, plainer still, especially with regard to his prophetical office, in Deut. xviii. 18, &c. *I will raise up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I command him,* &c. This is a plainer prophecy of Christ than any before. All the preceding prophecies were in figurative, mystical language. The first prophecy was so, That the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. The promises made to

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Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, That *in their seed all the families of the earth should be blessed*, were also mystical; and not so particular, because the expression, *thy seed*, is general, and not plainly limited to any particular person. The prophecy of Jacob in blessing Judah, (Gen. xlix. 8.) is in mystical language; and so is that of Balaam, which speaks of Christ under the figurative expression of a *star*. But this is a plain prophecy, without being veiled at all in any mystical language.

There are several things contained in this prophecy of Christ. Here is his mediatorial office in general, ver. 16. Here it is revealed how he should be a person to stand between them and God, a being of such awful majesty, holiness, and justice, that they could not have come to him, and have intercourse with him immediately, without a mediator to stand between them; because, if they came to such a sin-revenging God immediately, they should die; God would prove a consuming fire to them. And here is a particular revelation of Christ, with respect to his prophetical office: *I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, &c.* And further, it is revealed what kind of a prophet he should be; a prophet like unto Moses, who was the head and leader of all the people, and who, under God, had been their redeemer, to bring them out of the house of bondage. He was their shepherd, by whom God led them through the Red Sea and the wilderness, was an intercessor for them with God, and was both a prophet and a king in the congregation; for Moses had the power of a king among them. It is said of him, (Deut. xxxiii. 5.) that *he was king in Jeshurun*, was the prophet by whom God built up his church, and delivered his instructions of worship. Thus Christ was to be a prophet like unto Moses; so that this is both the plainest and fullest prophecy of Christ that ever had been from the beginning of the world to this time.

The next prophecy respects the calling of the Gentiles, which should be after Christ's coming, Deut. xxxii. 21. Here is a very plain prophecy of the rejection of the Jews and calling the Gentiles. As they moved *God* to jealousy, by that which was not God, by casting him off, and taking others that were no gods in his room; so God declares that he will move *them* to jealousy in like manner, by casting them off, and taking others, who had not been his people, in their room. The Apostle Paul takes notice of this prophecy, as foretelling the calling of the Gentiles, in Rom. x. 19, 20. *But I say, Did not Israel know? First, Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest to them that asked not after me.*

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Thus you see how the light of the gospel, which first began to dawn and glimmer immediately after the fall, gradually increases the nearer we come to Christ's time.

X. Another thing by which God carried on this work in this time, was a remarkable pouring out of his spirit on the young generation in the wilderness. The generation that was grown up when they came out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, was a very froward and perverse generation. They were tainted with the idolatry and wickedness of Egypt, and were not weaned from it. Ezek. xx. 6—8. Hence they made the golden calf in imitation of the idolatry of Egypt, that was wont to worship a bull or an ox; and therefore cattle are called *the abomination of the Egyptians; i. e.* their idol. With this generation God was exceedingly angry, and swore in his wrath, that they should not enter into his rest. But the younger generation, who were under twenty years old when they came out of Egypt, were not so, Numb. xiv. 31. *But your little ones, whom ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in; and they shall know the land that ye have despised.* This was the generation with whom the covenant was renewed, as we have an account in Deuteronomy, and that entered into the land of Canaan. This generation God was pleased to make a people to his praise, and they were eminent for piety; as appears by many things said about them; particularly, Jer. ii. 2, 3. *I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness to the Lord, and the first-fruits of his increase.* Here the generation that went after God in the wilderness, is spoken of with very high commendations, as eminent for holiness. Their love to God is distinguished like the love of a bride at her espousals, when they followed him through that dreadful wilderness, after they went back from Kadesh-Barnea, Deut. viii. 15. *Who led thee through the great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water.* Though this generation had a much greater trial, than the generation of their fathers had before they came to Kadesh-Barnea, yet they never murmured against God, as their fathers had done: but their trials had a contrary effect upon them, to awaken, convince, and humble them, and fit them for great mercy. They were awakened by those awful judgments of God, inflicted on their fathers, whereby their carcases fell in the wilderness. God poured out his Spirit with those awakening providences, and their own travel in the wilderness, and the word preached to them by Moses; whereby they were humbled, and at length multitudes of them were savingly converted; as Deut. viii. 2, 3. *And thou shalt remember the way which the*

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Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no. And he humbled thee, &c. And ver. 15. *Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness,—that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end.* And therefore it is said, Hos. xiii. 5. *I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought.* God allured them, and brought them into that wilderness, and spake comfortably to them, as it was foretold that he would do afterwards, Hos. ii. 14.

Those terrible judgments that were executed in the congregation after their turning back from Kadesh-Barnea, in the matter of Korah, and the matter of Peor, were chiefly on the *old* generation, whom God consumed in the wilderness. Those rebellions were chiefly among the elders of the congregation, who were given up to their hearts' lust; and they walked in their own counsels, and God was grieved with their manners forty years in the wilderness.

That this younger congregation were eminent for piety, appears by all their history. The former generation were wicked, and were followed with curses; but this was holy, and wonderful blessings followed them. God did great things for them; he fought for them, and gave them the possession of Canaan. And it is God's manner, when he hath very great mercies to bestow on a visible people, first, to fit them for such mercies, and then to confer them. So it was here: They believed in God, and by faith overcame Sihon and Og, and the giants of Canaan; and are commended for cleaving to the Lord: Josh. xxiii. 8. Joshua says unto them, *Cleave unto the Lord, as ye have done unto this day.* But when Joshua and all that generation were dead, there arose another that knew not the Lord. This pious generation showed a laudable and fervent zeal for God on several occasions; as on occasion of Achan's sin; but especially when they suspected the two tribes and a half had set up an altar in opposition to the altar of burnt-offering. There never was any generation of Israel of which so much good and so little evil is mentioned. It is further observable, that in the time of this generation was the second general circumcision, whereby the reproach of Israel was fully rolled away, and they became pure; and when afterwards they were polluted by Achan, they purged themselves again.

The men of the former generation being dead, and God having sanctified this to himself, he solemnly renewed his covenant with them, as we have a particular account in the 29th chapter of Deuteronomy. We find that such solemn renovations of the covenant commonly accompanied any remarkable pour-

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ing out of the Spirit, causing a general reformation: so we find it was in Hezekiah's and Josiah's times. It is questionable whether there ever was a time of so great a flourishing of religion in the Israelitish church, as in that generation; and as, in the Christian church, religion was in its most flourishing circumstances in the day of its espousals, in the apostles' days, so it seems to have been with the Jewish church in the days of its first establishment in the times of Moses and Joshua.

Thus God, at this time, gloriously advanced the work of redemption, both by his word and Spirit. Hereby the work of redemption was promoted, not only as it was in itself a glorious instance of redemption in its application, but as this was what God used for the orderly establishment of the Israelitish church, when it was first settled in the regular observance of God's ordinances in Canaan: even as the pouring out of the Spirit, in the beginning of the Christian church, was a great means for establishing the Christian church in all succeeding ages.

XI. The next thing I would observe, was God's bringing the people of Israel by Joshua, and settling them in that land where Christ was to be born, and which was the great type of the heavenly Canaan, which Christ has purchased. Joshua was of Joseph's posterity, and was an eminent type of Christ, and is therefore called the shepherd, the stone of Israel. Gen. xlix. 24. Being such a type, he bore the name of Christ. *Joshua* and *Jesus* are the same name, the one Hebrew, the other Greek: and therefore, in the New Testament, originally written in Greek, Joshua is called Jesus, Acts vii. 45. *Which also our fathers brought in with Jesus, i. e.* Joshua; Heb. iv. 8. *If Jesus had given them rest, he would not have spoken of another day; i. e.* If Joshua had given them rest.

God wonderfully gave his people possession of this land, conquering its former inhabitants, and the mighty giants, as Christ conquered the devil. He first conquered the great kings on the eastern side of Jordan, Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan; and then divided the river Jordan, as before he had done the Red Sea; causing the walls of Jericho to fall down at the sound of the trumpets of the priests. That sound typified the sound of the gospel by the preaching of gospel ministers, the walls of the accursed city Jericho signifying the walls of Satan's kingdom. After this he wonderfully destroyed the mighty host of the Amorites under the five kings, causing the sun and moon to stand still, to help the people against their enemies, at the prayer of the typical Jesus; plainly intimating, that God would make the whole course of nature to be subservient to the affair of redemption; and that every thing should give place to the welfare of God's redeemed people.

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Thus did Christ show his great love to his elect, that he would make the course of nature to give place to their happiness and prosperity; and showed that the sun and moon, and all things visible and invisible, where their's by his purchase. At the same time, Christ fought as the captain of their host, and cast down great hailstones upon their enemies, by which more were slain than by the sword of Israel. And after this Christ gave the people a mighty victory over a yet greater army in the northern part of the land, gathered together at the waters of Merom, as the sand of the sea shore, Josh. xi. 4.

Thus God gave the people whence Christ was to proceed, the land where he was to be born; where he was to live, preach, and work miracles; to die, and rise again; and whence he was to ascend into heaven, as the land which was a great type of heaven.

XII. Another thing that God did towards carrying on this affair, was his actually setting up his stated worship among the people, as it had been before instituted in the wilderness. This worship was appointed at Mount Sinai; it was to make way for the coming of Christ; and the innumerable ceremonial observances of it were typical of him and his redemption. But there were many parts of their instituted worship that could not be observed in the wilderness, by reason of their unsettled state there. And there were many precepts that respected the land of Canaan, and their places of habitation there; which therefore could not be put in practice, till they came into that land. But now, when this was brought to pass, God set up his tabernacle in the midst of his people, as he had before promised them, Lev. xxvi. 11. *I will set my tabernacle amongst you.* The tabernacle was set up at Shiloh, Josh. xviii. 1; and the priests and the Levites had their offices appointed them, and the cities of refuge, and now the people were in a condition to observe their feasts of the first-fruits, and their feasts of ingathering, and to bring all their tithes and appointed offerings to the Lord; and most parts of God's worship were set up, though there were some things that were not observed till afterwards.

XIII. The next thing was God's wonderfully preserving that people, from this time forward, when all the males went up, three times in the year, to the place where God's ark was. The people of Israel were generally surrounded with enemies, who sought all opportunities to destroy them, and dispossess them of their land. Till David's time, there were great numbers in the land of the remains of the Canaanites, and the other former inhabitants of the land, who were bitter enemies to the people of Israel: and these had, three times in the year, a fair opportunity of over-running their country, and getting possession of their cities, when only the women, and those who were

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not able to go up, were left behind. And yet they were remarkably preserved throughout all generations at such seasons, agreeably to the promise, Exod. xxxiv. 24. *Neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year.* So wonderfully did God order affairs, and influence the hearts of their enemies. They were full of enmity against Israel, desired to dispossess them of their land, and often had so fair an opportunity, that the whole country was left naked and empty of all that could resist them. It would have been only for them to go and take possession; and yet we never read, in all their history, of any of their enemies taking these opportunities against them; which could be no less than a continual miracle, which God, for the preservation of his church, kept up for so many generations. It was surely a wonderful dispensation of divine providence to maintain and promote God's great design of redemption.

XIV. God's preserving his church and the true religion from being wholly extinct in the frequent apostacies of the Israelites in the time of the judges. How prone was that people to forsake the true God, who had done such wonderful things for them, and to fall into idolatry! and how did the land, from time to time, seem to be almost over-run with it! But yet God never suffered his true worship to be totally rooted out: his tabernacle stood, the ark was preserved, the book of the law was kept from being destroyed, God's priesthood was upheld, and he still had a church among the people. Time after time, when religion seemed to be almost gone, then God granted a revival, and sent some angel, or raised up some eminent person, to be an instrument of their reformation.

XV. God's preserving that nation from being destroyed, although they were so often subdued and brought under the dominion of their enemies. It was a wonder, not only that the true religion was not wholly rooted out, and so the church destroyed that way; but also that the very nation in which that church was, was not utterly destroyed; they were so often brought under the power of their enemies. One while they were subdued by Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, another while they were brought under the Moabites; now they *were sold into the hand* of Jabin, king of Canaan; then they were under the dominion of the Midianites; now they were sorely distressed by the children of Ammon; and then by the Philistines. But yet God, in all these dangers, preserved them, and kept them from being wholly overthrown. From time to time, when it was come to extremity, and God saw that they were upon the very brink of ruin, then he raised up a deliverer, agreeable to Deut. xxxii. 36. *For the Lord*

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shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants; when he seeth their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left.—Those remarkable dispensations of Providence are very elegantly set forth by the Psalmist, Psal. cvi. 34, &c.—These deliverers were all types of Christ, the great redeemer and deliverer of his church; and some of them very remarkably so; as, Barak, Jephtha, Gideon, and Samson, in very many particulars; and above all in the acts of Samson, as might be shown, were it not that this would take up too much time.

XVI. It is observable, that when Christ appeared to manage the affairs of his church in this period, he often appeared in the form of that nature which he took upon him in his incarnation. So he seems to have appeared repeatedly to Moses, and particularly at that time when God spake to him face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend, and he beheld the similitude of the Lord, (Numb. xii. 8.) after he had besought him to show him his glory; which was the most remarkable vision that ever he had of Christ. There was a twofold discovery that Moses had of Christ: one was spiritual, made to his mind, by the word that was proclaimed: *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation*, Exod. xxxiv. 6, &c. Another was external; which was that which Moses saw, when Christ passed by, and put him in a cleft of the rock. What he saw was doubtless a glorious human form, in which Christ appeared to him, and in all likelihood the form of his glorified human nature, in which he should afterwards appear. He saw not his face; for it is not to be supposed that any man could subsist under a sight of the glory of Christ's human nature as it now appears.

So it was a human form in which Christ appeared to the seventy elders, of which we have an account, Exod. xxiv. 9, 11. *Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet, as it were, a paved work of a sapphire-stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.* So Christ appeared afterwards to Joshua in the form of the human nature, Josh. v. 13, 14. *And it came to pass when Joshua was by Jericho, he lift up his eyes, and looked, and behold, there stood a man over against him, with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay, but as*

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Captain of the host of the Lord I now come. And so he appeared to Gideon, Judg. vi. 11, &c. and so also to Manoah, Judg. xiii. 17—21. Here Christ appeared to Manoah in a representation both of his incarnation and death; of his incarnation, in that he appeared in a human form; and of his death and sufferings, represented by the sacrifice of a kid, and by his ascending up in the flame of the sacrifice; intimating, that it was he that was the great sacrifice, that must be offered up to God for a sweet savour, in the fire of his wrath, as that kid was burned and ascended up in the flame. *Thus Christ appeared, time after time, in the form of that nature he was afterwards to assume; because he now appeared on the same design and to carry on the same work.*

XVII. Another thing I would mention, done in this period towards the work of redemption, is the beginning of a succession of prophets, and erecting a school of the prophets, in Samuel's time. There was something of this spirit of prophecy in Israel after Moses, before Samuel. Joshua and many of the judges had a degree of it. Deborah was a prophetess; and some of the high-priests were inspired with this spirit; particularly Eli. That space of time was not wholly without instances of those that were set apart of God especially to this office, and so were called prophets. Such an one we read of, Judg. vi. 8. *The Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, &c.* Such an one he seems to have been of whom we read, 1 Sam. ii. 27. *And there came a man of God to Eli, &c.*

But there was no such order of men upheld in Israel, for any constancy, before Samuel; the want of it is taken notice of in 1 Sam. iii. 1. *And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision.* But in Samuel there was begun a *succession* of prophets, maintained continually from that time, at least with very little interruption, till the spirit of prophecy ceased, about Malachi's time: and therefore Samuel is spoken of in the New Testament as the beginning of this succession of prophets, Acts iii. 24. *And all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have foretold of these days.* After Samuel was Nathan, and Gad, Iddo, and Heman, Asaph, and others. And afterwards, in the latter end of Solomon's reign, we read of Ahijah; and in Jeroboam and Rehoboam's time, we read of prophets; and so continually one prophet succeeded another till the captivity. In the writings of those prophets who are inserted in the canon of scripture, we read of prophets as being a constant order of men upheld in the land. And even during the captivity there were prophets still, as Ezekiel and Daniel; and after the captivity, as Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi.

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And because God intended a constant succession of prophets from Samuel's time, therefore in his time was begun a school of the prophets; that is, a school of young men, trained up under some great prophet, who was their master and teacher in the study of divine things, and the practice of holiness, to fit them for this office as God should call them to it. Those young men were called *the sons of the prophets;* and oftentimes they are termed *prophets.* These at first were under the tuition of Samuel. Thus we read of Samuel's being appointed over them, 1 Sam. xix. 20. *And when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them.* The company of prophets of whom we read, 1 Sam. x. 5. were the same. Afterwards we read of their being under Elijah. Elisha was one of these sons; but he desired to have a double portion of his spirit, as his successor, as the eldest son was wont to have a double portion of the estate of his father: and therefore the sons of the prophets, when they perceived that the spirit of Elijah rested on Elisha, submitted themselves to him, and owned him for their master, as they had done Elijah before him, 2 Kings ii. 15. *And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho, saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they bowed themselves to the ground before him.* Elisha being their master, or teacher, he had the care of them; as you may see, 2 Kings iv. 38. *And Elisha came again into Gilgal, and there was a dearth in the land, and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets.* In Elijah's and Elisha's time, there were several places where there resided companies of these sons of the prophets; as at Bethel, at Jericho, and at Gilgal, unless that at Gilgal and Jericho were the same: and possibly that which is called *the college,* where the prophetess Huldah resided, was another at Jerusalem; see 2 Kings xxii. 14. It is there said of Huldah the prophetess, that *she dwelt in Jerusalem, in the college.* They had houses built, where they used to dwell together; and therefore those at Jericho being multiplied, and finding their houses too little for them, desired leave of their master and teacher Elisha, that they might go and hew timber to build a bigger; as you may see, 2 Kings vi. 1, 2. At some times there were numbers of these sons of the prophets in Israel; for when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord, it is said, that Obadiah took an hundred of them, and hid them by fifty in a cave, 1 Kings xviii. 4.

These schools of the prophets being set up by Samuel, and afterwards kept up by such as Elijah and Elisha, must be of divine appointment; and accordingly we find, that those sons of the prophets were often favoured with a degree of inspira-

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tion, while they continued under tuition; and God commonly when he called any prophet to the constant exercise of the prophetical office, and to some extraordinary service, took them out of these schools; though not universally. Hence the prophet Amos, speaking of his being called to the prophetical office, says, that he had not been educated in the schools of the prophets, and was not one of the sons of the prophets, Amos vii. 14, 15. But Amos taking notice of it as remarkable, that he should be so called, shows that it was God's ordinary manner to take his prophets out of these schools; for therein he did but bless his own institution.

Now this remarkable dispensation of Providence—God beginning a constant succession of prophets in Samuel's time, which was to last for many ages; and to that end, establishing a school of the prophets under Samuel, thenceforward to be continued in Israel—was a step that God took in the great affair of redemption. For the main business of this succession of prophets was, to foreshew Christ, and the glorious redemption he was to accomplish, and so to prepare the way for his coming; as appears by that forementioned place, Acts iii. 24, and Acts x. 43. *To him give all the prophets witness;* and Acts iii. 18. *But those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.*

The Old Testament church was not wholly without light, but had not the light of the sun directly, only as reflected. Now these prophets were the luminaries that reflected the light of the sun; and accordingly they spoke abundantly of Jesus Christ, as appears by what we have of their prophecies in writing. And they made it very much their business, when they studied in their schools or colleges, and elsewhere, to search out the work of redemption; agreeable to what the apostle Peter says of them, 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. *Of which salvation the prophets have inquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ that was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.* We are told that the church of the Redeemer is built on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, the Redeemer himself being the chief corner-stone, Eph. ii. 20.

This was the first thing of the nature that ever was done in the world; and it was a great thing that God did towards further advancing this great building of redemption. There had been before occasional prophecies of Christ, as was shown; but now the time drawing nearer when the Redeemer should come, it pleased God to appoint a certain order of men, in constant succession, whose main business it should be, to point

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out Christ and his redemption, and as his forerunners to prepare the way for his coming; and God established schools, wherein multitudes were instructed and trained up to that end, Rev. xix. 10. *I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

PART V.

From David to the Babylonish Captivity.

I COME now to the *fifth period* of the times of the Old Testament, beginning with *David*, and extending to the *Babylonish captivity*; and would now proceed to show how the work of redemption was therein carried on.——And here,

I. The first thing to be noticed, is God's anointing that person who was to be the ancestor of Christ, to be king over his people. The dispensations of Providence through the last period, respect the *people* whence Christ was to proceed; but now the scripture leads us to consider God's providence towards that particular *person* whence Christ was to descend, viz. David. It pleased God at this time remarkably to select out this person, from all the thousands of Israel, and to put a most honourable mark of distinction upon him, by anointing him to be king over his people. It was only God that could find him out. His father's house is spoken of as being little in Israel, and he was the youngest of all the sons of his father, and was least expected by Samuel to be the man whom God had chosen. God had before, in the former ages of the world, remarkably distinguished the persons from whom Christ was to come; as Seth, and Noah, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. But the last that we have any account of God's marking out in any notable manner, the very person of whom Christ was to come, was in Jacob's blessing his son Judah; unless we reckon Nashon's advancement in the wilderness to be the head of the tribe of Judah. But this distinction of the person of whom Christ was to come, in David, was very honourable; for it was God's anointing him to be king over his people. And there was something further denoted by David's anointing, than was in the anointing of Saul. God anointed Saul to be king *personally*; but God intended something further by sending Samuel to anoint David, viz. to establish the crown of Israel in him and his *family*, as long as Israel continued to be a kingdom; and not only so, but what

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was infinitely more still, establishing the crown of his universal church, his spiritual Israel, in his seed, to the end of the world, and through eternity.

This was a great dispensation of God, and a great step taken towards a further advancing of the work of redemption, according as the time drew near wherein Christ was to come. David, as he was the ancestor of Christ, so he was the greatest personal type of Christ of all under the Old Testament. The types of Christ were of three sorts; instituted, providential, and personal. The ordinance of *sacrificing* was the greatest of the *instituted* types; the redemption out of *Egypt* was the greatest of the *providential;* and David the greatest of the *personal* ones. Hence Christ is often called David in the prophecies of scripture; as Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24. *And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David;—My servant David a prince among them;* and so in many other places. He is very often spoken of as the seed and the son of David.

David being the ancestor and great type of Christ, his being solemnly anointed by God to be king over his people, that the kingdom of his church might be continued in his family for ever, may in some respects be looked on as an anointing of Christ himself. Christ was as it were anointed in him; and therefore Christ's anointing and David's anointing are spoken of under one in scripture: Psalm xxxix. 20. *I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him.* And David's throne and Christ's are spoken of as one: Luke i. 32. *And the Lord shall give him the throne of his father David.* Acts ii. 30. *David—knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne.*

Thus God beginning the kingdom of his church in the house of David, was, as it were, a new establishing of the kingdom of Christ; the beginning of it in a state of such visibility as it thenceforward continued in. It was planting the root, whence that branch of righteousness was afterwards to spring up, the everlasting king of his church; and therefore this everlasting king is called *the branch from the stem of Jesse.* Isa. xi. 1. *And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.* Jer. xxiii. 5. *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise up unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper.* So chap. xxxiii. 15. *In those days, and at that time, I will cause the branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.* So Christ, in the New Testament, is called the root and offspring of David, Rev. xxii. 16.

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It is observable, that God anointed David after Saul to reign in his room. He took away the crown from him and his family, who was higher in stature than any of his people, and was in their eyes fittest to bear rule; to give it to David, who was low of stature, and in comparison of despicable appearance. So God was pleased to show how Christ, who appeared despicable, without form or comeliness, and was despised and rejected of men, should take the kingdom from the great ones of the earth. And also it is observable, that David was the youngest of Jesse's sons, as Jacob the younger brother supplanted Esau, and got the birthright and blessing from him: and as Pharez, brother of Christ's ancestor, supplanted Zarah in the birth; and as Isaac, another of the ancestors of Christ, cast out his elder brother Ishmael; thus was that frequent saying of Christ fulfilled, "The last shall be first, and the first last."

II. The next thing I would observe, is God's preserving David's life, by a series of wonderful providences, till Saul's death. I before took notice of the wonderful preservation of other particular persons who were the ancestors of Christ; as Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; and have observed how, in their preservation, the work of redemption itself may be looked upon as preserved from being defeated, and the whole church, which is redeemed through him, from being overthrown. But the preservation of David was no less remarkable than that of any others already noticed. How often was there but a step between him and death. The first instance of it we have in his encountering a lion and a bear, when they had caught a lamb out of his flock, which, without miraculous assistance, could at once have rent this young stripling in pieces, as easily as they could the lamb that he delivered from them. So the root and offspring of David was preserved from the roaring lion that goes about seeking whom he may devour, and conquered him, and rescued the souls of men, that were as lambs in the mouth of this lion. Another remarkable instance was, in preserving him from that mighty giant Goliath, who was strong enough to have torn him to pieces, and given his flesh to the beasts of the field, and to the fowls of the air, as he threatened. But God preserved him, and gave him the victory over Goliath, so that he cut off his head with his own sword, and thus was made the deliverer of Israel. So Christ slew the spiritual Goliath with his own weapon, the cross, and delivered his represented people. And how remarkably did God preserve David from being slain by Saul, when he first sought his life. He gave him his daughter to be a snare to him, that the hand of the Philistines might be upon him, requiring of him a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, that so

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his life might be exposed to them. The same divine care was evident in preserving him afterwards, when Saul spake to Jonathan, and to all his servants, to kill David; and in inclining Jonathan, instead of his killing him, as his father commanded, to love him as his own soul, and to be a great instrument of his preservation, even so as to expose his own life to preserve David; though one would have thought that none would have been more willing to have David killed than Jonathan, seeing that he was competitor with him for the crown. Again, Saul threw a javelin at him, to smite him even to the wall; and sent messengers to his house, to watch, and to kill him, when Michal, Saul's daughter, let him down through a window. He afterwards sent messengers, once and again, to Naioth in Ramah, to take him, and they were remarkably prevented by miraculous impressions of the spirit of God; and afterwards, when Saul, being resolute in the affair, went himself, he also was among the prophets. How wonderfully was David's life preserved at Gath among the Philistines, when he went to Achish the king of Gath, and was there in the hands of the Philistines, who, one would have thought, would have dispatched him at once, he having so much provoked them by his exploits against them. He was again wonderfully preserved at Keilah, when he had entered into a fenced town, where Saul thought he was sure of him. And how wonderfully was he preserved from Saul, when he pursued and hunted him in the mountains? How remarkably did God deliver him in the wilderness of Maon, when Saul and his army were compassing David about? How was he delivered in the cave of Engedi, when, instead of Saul's killing David, God delivered Saul into his hands in the cave. David cut off his skirt, and might as easily have cut off his head. He was delivered in like manner in the wilderness of Ziph; and afterwards preserved in the land of the Philistines, though David had fought against the Philistines, and conquered them at Keilah, since he was last among them. This, one would think, would have been sufficient warning to them not to trust him, or let him escape a second time, if ever they had him in their hands again; but yet now, when they had a second opportunity, God wonderfully turned their hearts to befriend and protect, instead of destroying him.

Thus was the precious seed that virtually contained the Redeemer, and all the blessings of his redemption, wonderfully preserved, when hell and earth were conspired to destroy it. How often does David himself take notice of this, with praise and admiration, in the book of Psalms?

III. About this time, the written word of God, or the canon of scripture, was augmented by Samuel. I have before observed, that the canon of scripture was begun, and the first

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written rule of faith and manners was given to the church about the time of Moses. Joshua probably enlarged it, and wrote the last chapter of Deuteronomy, and most of the book of Joshua. Others think that Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and part of the first book of Samuel, were written by Samuel. However that was, of this we have good evidence, that Samuel made an addition to the canon of scripture; for Samuel is manifestly mentioned in the New Testament, as one of the prophets whose writings we have in scripture, Acts iii. 24. *Yea and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.* By that expression, "as many as have spoken," is meant, as many as have spoken by writing.

And the way that Samuel spoke of these times of Christ and the gospel, was by giving the history of those things that typified, and pointed to them, particularly what he wrote concerning David. The spirit of God moved him to commit those things to writing, chiefly because they pointed to Christ, and the times of the gospel; and, as was said before, this was the main business of all that succession of prophets that began in Samuel. That Samuel added to the canon of the scriptures seems further to appear from 1 Chron. xxix. 29. *Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold they are written in the book of Samuel the seer.*

Whether the book of Joshua was written by Samuel or not, yet it is the general opinion of divines, that the books of Judges and Ruth, and part of the first book of Samuel, were penned by him. The book of Ruth was penned for this reason, that though it seemed to treat of private affairs, yet the persons chiefly spoken of were of the family whence David and Christ proceeded, and so pointed to what the apostle Peter observed of Samuel and the other prophets, in the third chapter of Acts. These additions to the canon of scripture, the great and main instrument of the application of redemption, are to be considered as a further continuation of that work, and an addition made to that great building.

IV. Another thing God did towards this work, at that time, was his inspiring David to show forth Christ and his redemption, in divine songs, which should be for the use of the church, in public worship, throughout all ages. David was himself endued with the spirit of prophecy. He is called *a prophet*, Acts ii. 29, 30. *Let me freely speak to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day; therefore being a prophet and knowing that God had sworn with an oath, &c.* So that herein he was a type of Christ, that he was both a *prophet* and a *king*.

The oil that was used in anointing David was a type of

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the spirit of God; and the type and the antetype were given both together; as we are told, 1 Sam. xvi. 13. *Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren; and the spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward;* and it is probable, that it now came upon him in its prophetical influences. One way that this spirit influenced him was by inspiring him to show forth Christ, and the glorious things of his redemption, in divine songs, sweetly expressing the breathings of a pious soul, full of admiration of the glorious things of the Redeemer, inflamed with divine love and elevated praise; and therefore he is called the sweet psalmist of Israel, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. The main subjects of these songs were the glorious things of the gospel; as is evident by the interpretation that is often put upon them, and the use that is made of them in the New Testament: for there is no one book of the Old Testament that is so often quoted in the New, as the book of Psalms. Joyfully did this holy man sing of those great things of Christ's redemption, that had been the hope and expectation of God's church and people from the beginning; and joyfully did others follow him in it, as Asaph, Heman, Ethan, and others; for the book of Psalms was not all penned by David, though the greater part of it was. Hereby the canon of the scripture was further enlarged by an excellent portion of divine writ.

This was a great advancement that God made in this building; and the light of the gospel, which had been gradually growing, was exceedingly increased by it: for whereas before there was but here and there a prophecy given of Christ in a great many ages, here Christ is spoken of by his ancestor David abundantly, in multitudes of songs, speaking of his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension into heaven, his satisfaction, intercession; his prophetical, kingly, and priestly office; his glorious benefits in this life and that which is to come; his union with the church, and the blessedness of the church in him; the calling of the Gentiles, the future glory of the church near the end of the world, and Christ's coming to the final judgment. All these things, and many more, concerning Christ and his redemption, are abundantly spoken of in the book of Psalms.

This was also a glorious advancement of the affair of redemption, as God hereby gave his church a book of divine songs for their use in that part of their public worship, viz. singing his praises, throughout all ages to the end of the world. It is manifest the book of Psalms was given of God for this end. It was used in the church of Israel by God's appointment: this is manifest by the title of many of the Psalms, in which they are inscribed to the chief musician, *i. e.* to the man that was appointed to be the leader of divine songs in the

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temple, in the public worship of Israel. So David is called *the sweet psalmist of Israel*, because he penned psalms for the use of the church of Israel; and accordingly we have an account that they were actually made use of in the church of Israel for that end, even ages after David was dead; as 2 Chron. xxix. 30. *Moreover, Hezekiah the king, and the princes, commanded the Levites to sing praises unto the Lord, with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer.* And we find that the same are appointed in the New Testament to be made use of in the Christian church, in their worship: Eph. v. 19. *Speaking to yourselves in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.* Col. iii. 16. *Admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.* So they have been, and will, to the end of the world, be made use of in the church to celebrate the praises of God. The people of God were wont sometimes to worship God by singing songs to his praise before; as they did at the Red Sea; and they had Moses' prophetical song, in the 32d chapter of Deuteronomy, committed to them for that end; and Deborah, Barak, and Hannah, sung praises to God: but now first did God commit to his church a book of divine songs for their constant use.

V. The next thing I would notice, is God's actually exalting David to the throne of Israel, notwithstanding all the opposition made to it. God was determined to do it, and he made every thing give place that stood in its way. He removed Saul and his sons out of the way; and first set David over the tribe of Judah; then, having removed Ishbosheth, set him over all Israel. Thus did God fulfil his word to David. He took him from the sheep-cote, and made him king over his people Israel, Psalm lxxviii. 70, 71. And now the throne of Israel was established in that family in which it was to continue for ever.

VI. Now first it was that God proceeded to choose a particular city out of all the tribes of Israel to place his name there. There is several times mention made in the law of Moses, of the children of Israel bringing their oblations to the place which God should choose; as Deut. xii. 5—7. and other places; but God had never proceeded to do it till now. The tabernacle and ark were never fixed, but sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another; but now God proceeded to choose Jerusalem. The city of Jerusalem was never thoroughly conquered, or taken out of the hands of the Jebusites, till David's time. It is said in Joshua xv. 63. *As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day.* But now David wholly subdued it, as we have an account in 2 Sam. v. And now God proceeded to choose that city *to place his name there*, as appears

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by David's bringing up the ark thither soon after; and therefore this is mentioned afterwards as the first time God proceeded to choose a city to that end. 2 Chron. vi. 5, 6, and chap. xii. 13. Afterwards God proceeded to show David the very place where he would have his temple built, viz. in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

This city of Jerusalem is therefore called the *holy city;* and it was the greatest type of the church of Christ in all the Old Testament. It was redeemed by David, the Captain of the hosts of Israel, out of the hands of the Jebusites, to be God's city, the holy place of his rest for ever, where he would dwell. So Christ, the Captain of his people's salvation, redeems his church out of the hands of devils, to be his holy and beloved city. And therefore how often does the scripture, when speaking of Christ's redemption of his church, call it by the names of Zion and Jerusalem? This was the city that God had appointed to be the place of the first gathering and erecting of the Christian church after Christ's resurrection, of that remarkable effusion of the spirit of God on the apostles and primitive Christians, and the place whence the gospel was to sound forth into all the world; the place of the first Christian church, that was to be, as it were, the mother of all other churches through the world; agreeable to that prophecy, Is. ii. 3, 4. *Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people,* &c. Thus God chose Mount Zion whence the gospel was to be sounded forth, as the law had been from Mount Sinai.

VII. The next thing to be observed here, is God's solemnly renewing the covenant of grace with David, and promising that the Messiah should be of his seed. We have an account of it in the 7th chapter of the second book of Samuel. It was done on occasion of the thoughts David entertained of building God an house. On this occasion God sends Nathan the prophet to him, with the glorious promises of the covenant of grace. It is especially contained in these words, (ver. 16.) *And thy house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee; thy throne shall be established for ever.* Which promise has respect to Christ, the seed of David, and is fulfilled in him only: for the kingdom of David has long since ceased, any otherwise than as it is upheld in Christ.

That this covenant, now established with David by Nathan the prophet, was the covenant of grace, is evident by the plain testimony of scripture, Is. lv. 1—3. There we have Christ inviting sinners to come to the waters, &c. And in the 3d verse, he says, *Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear and your souls shall live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David.* Here Christ

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offers to poor sinners, if they will come to him, to give them an interest in the same everlasting covenant that he had made with David, conveying to them the same sure mercies. But what is that covenant, in which sinners obtain an interest when they come to Christ, but the covenant of grace?

This was the fifth solemn establishment of the covenant of grace with the church after the fall. The covenant of grace was revealed and established all along. But there had been particular seasons, wherein God had in a very solemn manner renewed this covenant with his church, giving forth a new edition and establishment of it, revealing it in a new manner. The first was with Adam; the second with Noah; the third with the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the fourth was in the wilderness by Moses; and now the fifth is made to David.

This establishment of the covenant of grace, David always esteemed the greatest smile of God upon him, the greatest honour put upon him; he prized it, and rejoiced in it above all the other blessings of his reign. You may see how joyfully and thankfully he received it, when Nathan came to him with the glorious message, 2 Sam. vii. 18, &c. And so David, in his last words, declares this to be all his salvation, and all his desire; 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. *He hath made me with an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation and all my desire.*

VIII. It was by David that God first gave his people Israel the possession of the whole promised land. I have before shown, how God giving possession of the promised land belonged to the covenant of grace. This was done in a great measure by Joshua, but not fully. Joshua did not wholly subdue that part of the promised land that was strictly called the land of Canaan, and that was divided by lot to the several tribes; but there were great numbers of the old inhabitants left unsubdued, as we read in the books of Joshua and Judges; and there were many left to prove Israel, and to be as thorns in their sides. There were the Jebusites in Jerusalem, and many of the Canaanites, and the whole nation of the Philistines, who all dwelt in that part of the land that was divided by lot, and chiefly in that which belonged to the tribes of Judah and Ephraim.

And thus these remains of the old inhabitants of Canaan continued unsubdued till David's time; but he wholly subdued them all. Which is agreeable to what St. Stephen observes, Acts vii. 45. *Which also our fathers brought in with Jesus (i. e. Joshua) into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David.* They were till the days of David in driving them out, before they had wholly subdued them. But David

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entirely brought them under. He subdued the Jebusite, the whole nation of the Philistines, and all the rest of the remains of the seven nations of Canaan; 1 Chron. xviii. 1. *Now after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them, and took Gath and her towns out of the hands of the Philistines.*

After this, all the remains of the former inhabitants of Canaan were made bond-servants to the Israelites. The posterity of the Gibeonites became servants before, hewers of wood, and drawers of water, for the house of God. But Solomon, David's son and successor, put all the other remains of the seven nations of Canaan to bond-service; at least made them pay a tribute of bond-service, 1 Kings ix. 20—22. And hence we read of the children of Solomon's servants, after the return from the Babylonish captivity, Ezra ii. 55. and Neh. xi. 3. They were the children or posterity of the seven nations of Canaan, that Solomon had subjected to bond-service.

Thus David subdued the whole land of Canaan, strictly so called. But then that was not one half, nor quarter, of the land God had promised to their fathers. The land often promised to their fathers, included all the countries from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates. These were the bounds of the land promised to Abraham, Gen. xv. 18. *In that same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt, unto the great river, the river Euphrates.* So again God promised at Mount Sinai, Exod. xxiii. 31. *And I will set thy bounds from the Red Sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee.* So again, Deut. xi. 24. *Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread, shall be yours: from the wilderness, and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea, shall your coast be.* Again, the same promise is made to Joshua: Josh. i. 3, 4. *Every place that the sole of your feet shall tread upon, have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses; from the wilderness and this Lebanon, even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea, towards the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.* But the land of which Joshua gave the people possession, was but a little part of this land. And the people never had possession of it, till now, when God gave it them by David.

This large country did not only include that Canaan which was divided by lot to those who came in with Joshua, but the land of the Moabites and Ammonites, the land of the Amalekites, and the rest of the Edomites, and the country of

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Zobah. All these nations were subdued and brought under the children of Israel by David. And he put garrisons in the several countries, and they became David's servants, as we have a particular account in the 8th chapter of 2d Samuel: and David extended their border to the river Euphrates, as was promised; see the 3d verse: *And David smote also Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates.* And accordingly we read, that Solomon his son reigned over all the region on this side the river, 1 Kings iv. 24. *For he had dominion over all the region on this side the river, from Tiphsha even unto Azzah, over all the kings on this side the river.* This Artaxerxes king of Persia takes notice of long after: Ezra iv. 20. *There have been mighty kings also over Jerusalem, which have ruled over all countries beyond the river; and toll, tribute, and custom was paid unto them.*

So that Joshua, that eminent type of Christ, did but begin the work of giving Israel the possession of the promised land; but left it to be finished by that much greater type and ancestor of Christ, even David, who subdued far more of that land than ever Joshua had done. And in this extent of his and Solomon's dominion was some resemblance of the great extent of Christ's kingdom; which is set forth by this very thing, Psal. lxxii. 8. *He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.* See also 1 Kings viii. 56.

IX. God by David perfected the Jewish worship, and added to it several new institutions. The law was given by Moses, but yet all the institutions of the Jewish worship were not given by Moses; some were added by divine direction. So this greatest of all personal types of Christ did not only perfect Joshua's work, in giving Israel the possession of the promised land, but he also finished Moses' work, in perfecting the instituted worship of Israel. Thus there must be a number of typical prophets, priests, and princes, to complete one figure or shadow of Christ the antetype, he being the substance of all the types and shadows. Of so much more glory was Christ accounted worthy, than Moses, Joshua, David, and Solomon, and all the great prophets, priests, and princes, judges, and saviours of the Old Testament put together.

The ordinances of David are mentioned as of parallel validity with those of Moses, 2 Chron. xxiii. 18. *Also Jehoiada appointed the offices of the house of the Lord by the hand of the priests the Levites, whom David had distributed in the house of the Lord, to offer the burnt-offerings of the Lord, as it is written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, as it was ordained by David.* The worship of Israel was

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perfected by David, by the addition he made to the ceremonial law, (1 Chron. xxiii. &c.) consisting in the several orders and courses into which the Levites were divided, and the work and business to which he appointed them, different from what Moses had appointed them to; and also in the divisions of the priests, the sons of Aaron, into four and twenty courses, assigning to every course their business in the house of the Lord, and their particular stated times of attendance there. He also appointed some of the Levites to a new office, that of singers, particularly ordering and regulating them in that office, (1 Chron. xxv.) Others of the Levites he appointed by law to the several services of porters, treasurers, officers, and judges: and these ordinances of David were kept up thenceforth in the church of Israel, as long as the Jewish church lasted. Thus we find the several orders of priests, and the Levites, the porters, and singers, after the captivity. And we find the courses of the priests appointed by David still continuing in the New Testament; Zacharias the father of John the Baptist was a priest of the course of Abia; which is the same with the course of Abijah appointed by David, 1 Chron. xxiv. 10.

Thus David as well as Moses was made like to Christ the son of David, in this respect, that by him God gave in a manner, a new ecclesiastical establishment, and new institutions of worship. David did not only add to the institutions of Moses, but by those additions he abolished some of the old institutions that had been in force till that time; particularly those laws which appointed the business of the Levites, which we have in the 3d and 4th chapters of Numbers, which very much consisted in their charge of the several parts and utensils of the tabernacle. But those laws were now abolished; and they were no more to carry those things, as they had been used to do. But David appointed them to other work instead of it; 1 Chron. xxiii. 26. *And also unto the Levites, they shall no more carry the tabernacle, nor any vessels of it for the service thereof:* A sure evidence that the ceremonial law given by Moses is not perpetual, as the Jews suppose; but might be wholly abolished by Christ: for if David, a type of the Messiah, might abolish the law of Moses in part, much more might the Messiah himself abolish the whole.

David, by God's appointment, abolished all use of the tabernacle built by Moses, and of which he had the pattern from God: for God now revealed it to David to be his will, that a temple should be built instead of the tabernacle. This was a great presage of what Christ, the son of David, would do when he should come, viz. abolish the whole Jewish ecclesiastical constitution, which was but as a moveable tabernacle,

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to set up the spiritual gospel-temple, which was to be far more glorious, of greater extent, and was to last for ever. David had the pattern of all things pertaining to the temple showed him, even in like manner as Moses had the pattern of the tabernacle: and Solomon built the temple according to that pattern which he had from his father David, which *he* received from God. 1 Chron. xxviii. 11, 12. *Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy-seat, and the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the Lord, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things.* And ver. 19. *All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern.*

X. The canon of scripture seems at or after the close of David's reign to be added to by the prophets Nathan and Gad. It appears probable by the scriptures, that they carried on the history of the two books of Samuel from the place where Samuel left it, and finished them. These seem to be called *the book of Samuel the seer, and Nathan the prophet, and Gad the seer,* 1 Chron. xxix. 29. *Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer.*

XI. The next thing I would notice, is God's wonderfully continuing the kingdom of his visible people in the line of Christ's legal ancestors, as long as they remained an independent kingdom. Thus it was without any interruption worth notice. Indeed the kingdom of all the tribes of Israel was not kept in that line; but the dominion of that part in which the true worship of God was upheld, who were God's visible people, was always kept in the family of David, as long as there was any such thing as an independent king of Israel; according to his promise to David; and not only in the *family* of David, but always in that *part* of David's posterity whence Christ was legally descended. So that Christ's legal ancestor was always on the throne, excepting Jehoahaz, who reigned three months, and Zedekiah; as you may see in Matthew's genealogy of Christ.

Christ was *legally* descended from the kings of Judah, though not *naturally*. He was both legally and naturally descended from David. He was naturally descended from Nathan the son of David; for Mary his mother was one of the posterity of David by Nathan, as you may see in Luke's genealogy; but Joseph, the reputed and legal father of Christ, was naturally descended of Solomon and his successors,

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as we have an account in Matthew's genealogy. Jesus Christ, though he was not the natural son of Joseph, yet by the law and constitution of the Jews, was Joseph's heir; because he was the lawful son of Joseph's lawful wife, conceived while she was his legally espoused wife. The Holy Ghost raised up seed to him. A person, by the law of Moses, might be the legal son and heir of another, whose natural son he was not; as sometimes a man raised up seed to his brother: a brother, in some cases, was to build up a brother's house; so the Holy Ghost built up Joseph's house. Joseph being in the direct line of the kings of Judah, of the house of David, he was in this respect the legal heir of the crown of David; and Christ being legally his first-born son, he was his heir; and so Christ, by the law, was the proper heir of the crown of David, and is therefore said to sit upon the throne of his father David.

The crown of God's people was wonderfully kept in the line of Christ's legal ancestors. When David was old, and not able any longer to manage the affairs of the kingdom, Adonijah, one of his sons, set up to be king, and seemed to have obtained his purpose. All things for a while seemed fair on his side, and he thought himself strong. But Adonijah was not the ancestor of Joseph, the legal father of Christ; and therefore how wonderfully did Providence work here! what a strange and sudden revolution! All Adonijah's kingdom and glory vanished away as soon as it was begun; and Solomon, the legal ancestor of Christ, was established in the throne.

And after Solomon's death, when Jeroboam had conspired against the family, and Rehoboam carried himself in such a manner that it was a wonder *all Israel* was not provoked to forsake him, (as ten tribes actually did,) and set up Jeroboam in opposition to him; and though he was a wicked man, and deserved to have been rejected altogether from being king; yet he being the legal ancestor of Christ, God kept the kingdom of the two tribes, in which the true religion was upheld, in his possession. And though his son Abijam was another wicked prince; yet God still continued the crown in the family, and gave it to Abijam's son, Asa. And afterwards, though many of the kings of Judah were very wicked men, and horribly provoked God, as particularly Jehoram, Ahaziah, Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon; yet God did not take away the crown from their family, but gave it to their sons, because they were the ancestors of Christ. God's remembering his covenant established with David, is given as the reason why God did thus, notwithstanding their wicked lives; 1 Kings xv. 4. speaking of Abijam's wickedness, it is said, *Nevertheless, for David's sake did the Lord his God give him a*

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lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem: so 2 Chron. xxi. 7. speaking of Jehoram's great wickedness, it is said, *Howbeit the Lord would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David, and as he promised to give light unto him, and to his sons for ever.*

The crown of the ten tribes was changed from one family to another continually. First, Jeroboam took it; but the crown descended only to his son Nadab. Then Baasha, who was of another family, took it; and it remained in his posterity but one generation after his death. And then Zimri, who was his servant, and not of his posterity, took it; from whom Omri, who was of another family, took it. The crown continued in his family for three successions: and then Jehu, who was of another family, took it. The crown continued in his family for three or four successions; and then Shallum, that was of another family, took it. The crown did not descend at all to his posterity; but Menahem, who was of another family, took it; and it remained in his family but one generation after him. Then Pekah, who was of another family, took it; and after him Hoshea, that was still of another family, took it. So great a difference was there between the crown of Israel, and the crown of Judah; the one was continued evermore in the same family, and with very little interruption, in one right line; the other was continually tossed about from one family to another, as if it were the sport of fortune. The reason was not, because the kings of Judah, at least many of them, were better than the kings of Israel; but the one had the blessing in them; they were the ancestors of Christ, whose right it was to sit on the throne of Israel. But with the kings of Israel it was not so; and therefore divine providence exercised a continual care, through all the changes that happened through so many generations, and such a long space of time, to keep the crown of Judah in one direct line, in fulfilment of the everlasting covenant he had made with David, the mercies of which covenant were sure mercies; but in the other case there was no such covenant, and so no such interposing care of Providence.

And here it must not be omitted, that there was once a very strong conspiracy of the kings of Syria and Israel, in the time of that wicked king of Judah, Ahaz, to dispossess him and his family of the throne of Judah, and to set one of another family, even the son of Tabeal, on it; as Is. vii. 6. *Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal.* And they seemed very likely to accomplish their purpose. There seemed to be so great a likelihood of it, that the hearts of the people sunk within them; they gave up the cause. It

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is said, *The heart of Ahaz and his people was moved as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.* And on this occasion God sent the prophet Isaiah to encourage the people, and tell them that it should not come to pass. And because it looked so much like a lost cause to Ahaz and the people, therefore God directs the prophet to give them this sign of it, viz. that Christ should be born of the *legal seed of Ahaz;* as Is. vii. 14. *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.* This was a good sign, and a great confirmation of the truth of what God promised by Isaiah, viz. that the kings of Syria and Israel should never accomplish their purpose of dispossessing the family of Ahaz of the crown of Judah, and setting up the son of Tabeal; for Christ the Immanuel was to be of them.

XII. The building of the temple was a great type of three things, viz. of Christ, especially his human nature; of the church; and of heaven. The tabernacle seemed rather to represent the church in its moveable, changeable state, in this world. But that beautiful, glorious, costly structure, the temple, that succeeded the tabernacle, seems especially to represent the church in its glorified state in heaven. This temple was built according to the direction and the pattern shown by the Holy Ghost to David, in the place where was the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, in Mount Moriah, 2 Chron. iii. 1; the same mountain, (and probably in the very same place,) where Abraham offered up his son Isaac; for that is said to be in the land of Moriah, Gen. xxii. 2. and was called *the mountain of the Lord*, as this of the temple was, Gen. xxii. 14. *And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh; as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.*

This was the house where Christ dwelt, till he came to dwell in human nature. That his body was the antetype of this temple, appears from what he says, *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*, speaking of the temple of his body, John ii. 19, 20. This continued to be the house of God, the place of worship for his church, till Christ came; the place that God chose, where all their sacrifices were offered up, till the great sacrifice came. Into this temple the Lord came, even the messenger of the covenant. Here he often delivered his heavenly doctrine, and wrought miracles; here his church was gathered by the pouring out of the Spirit, after his ascension. Luke xxiv. 53. *And they were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.* And (Acts ii. 46.) respecting the multitudes that were converted by that great effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, it is said, *And they continued daily with one accord in the temple.* And the

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sacred historian (Acts v. 42.) speaking of the apostles, says, *And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.* And thence the sound of the gospel went forth, and the church was spread into all the world.

XIII. It is here worthy to be observed, that in Solomon's reign, after the temple was finished, the Jewish church was risen to its highest external glory. The Jewish church, as to its ordinances and constitution, is compared to the moon, Rev. xii. 1. *And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.* This church was like the moon in many other respects, but especially that it waxed and waned like the moon. From its first formation, which was in the covenant made with Abraham, when this moon began to appear, it had been gradually increasing in its glory. This time, wherein the temple was finished and dedicated, was about the middle between the calling of Abraham and the coming of Christ, and now it was full moon. After this the glory of the Jewish church gradually decreased, till Christ came; as I shall have occasion to show more particularly.

Now the church of Israel was in its highest external glory. Now Israel was multiplied exceedingly, so that they seemed to have become like the sand on the sea shore, 1 Kings iv. 20. Now the kingdom of Israel was firmly established in the right family, the family of which Christ was to come. Now God had chosen the city where he would place his name; and had fully given his people the possession of the promised land.—They now possessed the dominion of it all, in quietness and peace, even from the river of Egypt, to the great river Euphrates; all those nations which had formerly been their enemies, quietly submitted to them; none pretended to rebel against them. Now the Jewish worship in all its ordinances was fully settled: instead of a moveable tabernacle, they had a glorious temple; the most magnificent, beautiful, and costly structure, that ever had been, or has been since. Now, the people enjoyed peace and plenty, and sat every man under his vine and fig-tree, eating and drinking and making merry, 1 Kings iv. 20. They were in the highest pitch of earthly prosperity, silver being as plenty as stones, and the land full of gold and precious stones, and other precious foreign commodities, which were brought by Solomon's ships from Ophir and other parts of the world. Now they had a king reigning over them who was the wisest of men, and probably the greatest earthly prince that ever was: their fame went abroad into all the earth, so that they came from the utmost parts of the earth to see their glory and their happiness.

Thus God was pleased, in one of Messiah's ancestors,

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remarkably to shadow forth the kingdom of Christ and himself reigning in his glory. David, a man of war, a man who had shed much blood, and whose life was full of troubles and conflicts, was a more suitable representation of Christ in his state of humiliation, wherein he was conflicting with his enemies. But Solomon, a man of peace, was a representation more especially of Christ exalted, triumphing and reigning in his kingdom of peace. And the happy glorious state of the Jewish church at that time, remarkably represented two things:—1. A glorious state of the church on earth, in the latter ages of the world; those days of peace, when nation shall not lift sword against nation, nor learn war any more. 2. The future glorified state of the church in heaven. The earthly Canaan never was so lively a type of the heavenly Canaan as it was then, when the happy people of Israel indeed enjoyed it as a land flowing with milk and honey.

XIV. After this the glory of the Jewish church gradually declined more and more till Christ came; yet the work of redemption went on. Whatever failed or declined, God still carried on this work from age to age; this building was advancing higher and higher. It went on, even during the decline of the Jewish church, towards a further preparation of things for the coming of Christ, as well as during its increase; for so wonderfully were things ordered by the infinitely wise governor of the world, that whatever happened was ordered for good to this general design, and made a means of promoting it. When the Jews flourished, and were in prosperity, he made *that* to contribute to the promoting of this design; and when they were in adversity, God made this also contribute to the same. While the Jewish church was in its increasing state, the work of redemption was carried on by their increase; and when they came to their declining state, from Solomon's time till Christ, God carried on the work of redemption by *that*. The very decline itself, was one thing that God employed as a further preparation for Christ's coming.

As the moon, from the time of its full, is approaching nearer and nearer to her conjunction with the sun; so her light is still more and more decreasing, till at length when the conjunction comes, it is wholly swallowed up in the light of the sun. So it was with the Jewish church from the time of its highest glory in Solomon's time. In the latter end of Solomon's reign, the state of things began to darken, by his corrupting himself with idolatry, which much obscured the glory of this mighty and wise prince; and troubles also began to arise in his kingdom. After his death the kingdom was divided, and ten tribes revolted, and withdrew their subjection from the house of David, apostatizing also from the true worship of God in the temple at Jerusalem, and setting up

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the golden calves of Bethel and Dan. And presently after this the number of the ten tribes was greatly diminished in the battle of Jeroboam with Abijah, wherein there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men; which loss the kingdom of Israel probably never in any measure recovered.

The ten tribes finally apostatized from the true God under Jeroboam. The kingdom of Judah was greatly corrupted, and from that time forward more generally in a corrupt state than otherwise. In Ahab's time the kingdom of Israel did not only worship the calves of Bethel and Dan, but the worship of Baal was introduced. Before they pretended to worship the true God by these images, the calves of Jeroboam; but now Ahab introduced gross idolatry, and the direct worship of false gods in the room of the true God; and soon after, the worship of Baal was introduced into the kingdom of Judah, viz. in Jehoram's reign, by his marrying Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab. After this God began to cut Israel short, by finally destroying and sending into captivity, that part which was beyond Jordan, 2 Kings x. 32, &c. Then Tiglath-Pileser subdued and enslaved all the northern parts, 2 Kings xv. 29; and at last all the ten tribes were subdued by Shalmaneser, and they were finally carried away captive out of their own land. After this also the kingdom of Judah was carried captive into Babylon, and a great part of the nation never returned. Those who returned were but a small number, compared with what had been carried captive; and for the most part after this they were dependent on the power of other states. They were subject one while to the kings of Persia, then to the monarchy of the Grecians, and then to the Romans. And before Christ's time, the Jewish church was become exceeding corrupt, over-run with superstition and self-righteousness. And how small a flock was the church of Christ in the days of his incarnation!

God, by this gradual decline of the Jewish state and church from Solomon's time, prepared the way for the coming of Christ several ways.

1. The decline of the glory of this legal dispensation, made way for the introduction of the more glorious dispensation of the gospel. The evangelical dispensation was so much more glorious, that the legal dispensation had no glory in comparison with it. The ancient dispensation, even as it was in Solomon's time, was but an inferior glory, compared with the spiritual glory of the dispensation introduced by Christ. The church, under the Old Testament, was a child under tutors and governors, and God dealt with it accordingly. Those pompous externals are called by the apostle, *weak and beggarly elements*. It was fit that those things should be

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diminished as Christ approached; as John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, speaking of Christ, says, *He must increase, but I must decrease;* John iii. 30. It is fit that the twinkling stars should gradually withdraw their glory, when the sun is approaching towards his rising point. The glory of the Jewish dispensation must be gradually diminished, to prepare the way for the more joyful reception of the spiritual glory of the gospel. If the Jewish church, when Christ came, had been in the same external glory that it was in, in the reign of Solomon, men would have had their eyes so dazzled with it, that they would not have been likely, joyfully to exchange such great external grandeur, for only the spiritual glory of the despised Jesus. Again,

2. This gradual decline of the glory in the Jewish state, tended to make the glory of God's power, in the great effects of Christ's redemption, the more conspicuous. God's people being so diminished and weakened by one step after another, till Christ came, was very much like the diminishing of Gideon's army. God told Gideon, that the people with him were *too many* for the conquest of the Midianites, lest Israel should vaunt itself, saying, "My own hand hath saved me." And therefore all that were fearful were commanded to return; and there returned twenty and two thousand, and there remained ten thousand. But still they were too many; and then, by trying the people at the water, they were reduced to three hundred men. So the people in Solomon's time were too many, and mighty, and glorious for Christ; therefore he diminished them; first, by sending off the ten tribes; then he diminished them by the captivity into Babylon; and then they were further diminished by their great and general corruption when Christ came; so that Christ found very few godly persons among them. With a small handful of disciples, Christ conquered the world. Thus high things were brought down, that Christ might be exalted.

3. This prepared the way for Christ's coming, as it made the salvation of those Jews who were saved by Christ, to be more sensible and visible. Though the greater part of the Jewish nation was rejected, and the Gentiles called in their room; yet a great many thousands of the Jews were saved by Christ after his resurrection, Acts xxi. 20. They being taken from so low a state under temporal calamity in their bondage to the Romans, and from a state of so great superstition and wickedness, it made their redemption the more sensibly and visibly glorious.

XV. I would here take notice of the additions which were made to the canon of scripture in or soon after the reign of Solomon. There were considerable additions made by Solomon himself, who wrote the books of Proverbs and Eccle-

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siastes, probably near the close of his reign. His Song of Songs, as it is called, is wholly on the subject we are upon, viz. Christ and his redemption, representing the high and glorious relation, union, and love, that is between Christ and his redeemed church. And the sacred history seems, in Solomon's reign, and some of the next succeeding, to have been enlarged by the prophets Nathan and Ahijah, Shemaiah and Iddo. It is probable that part of the history which we have in the first of Kings, was written by them. (See 2 Chron. ix. 29. xii. 15. xiii. 22.)

XVI. God wonderfully upheld his church and the true religion through this period. It was very wonderful, considering the many and great apostacies of that people to idolatry. When the ten tribes had generally and finally forsaken the true worship, God kept up the true religion in the kingdom of Judah; and when *they* corrupted themselves, as they very often did exceedingly, and idolatry was ready totally to swallow up all, yet God kept the lamp alive. When things seemed to be come to an extremity, and religion at its last gasp, he was often pleased to grant blessed revivals by remarkable out-pourings of his Spirit, particularly in Hezekiah's and Josiah's time.

XVII. God remarkably kept the book of the law from being lost in times of general and long-continued neglect of it. The most remarkable instance of this kind was its preservation in the time of the great apostacy, during the greatest part of the long reign of Manasseh, which lasted fifty-five years, and the reign of Amon his son. This while the law was so much neglected, and such a careless and profane management of the affairs of the temple prevailed, that the book which used to be laid up by the side of the ark in the Holy of Holies, was lost for a long time; no body knew where it was. But yet God preserved it from being finally lost. In Josiah's time, when they came to repair the temple, it was found buried in rubbish. It had been lost so long that Josiah himself seems to have been much a stranger to it. (See 2 Kings xxii. 8, &c.)

XVIII. God remarkably preserved the tribe of which Christ was to proceed, from being ruined through the many and great dangers of this period. The visible church of Christ from Solomon's reign was mainly in the tribe of Judah. The tribe of Benjamin, which was annexed to them, was but a very small tribe, and that of Judah exceeding large; and as Judah took Benjamin under his protection when he went into Egypt to bring corn, so the tribe of Benjamin seemed to be under the covert of Judah ever after. And though, on occasion of Jeroboam's setting up the calves at Bethel and Dan, the Levites resorted to Judah out of all the tribes of Israel, (2 Chron. xi. 13;) yet they were also small, and not reckoned

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among the tribes. Many of the ten tribes, it is true, on that occasion, for the sake of worshipping God in the temple, left their inheritances in their several tribes, and settled in Judah, and so were incorporated with them, as we have an account in the chapter just quoted, (ver. 16;) yet the tribe of Judah was so much the prevailing part, that they were called by one name, *Judah*. Therefore God said to Solomon, (1 Kings xi. 13,) *I will not rend away all the kingdom: but will give one tribe to thy son, for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, which I have chosen.* So when the ten tribes were carried captive, it is said, there was none left but the tribe of Judah: 2 Kings xvii. 18. *Therefore the Lord was very wroth with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.* Whence they were all called *Jews*, a word derived from *Judah*.

This was the tribe of which Christ was to come; and in this chiefly did God's visible church consist, from Solomon's time. This people, over whom the kings who were legal ancestors of Christ, and of the house of David, reigned, was wonderfully preserved from destruction during this period, when they often seemed to be upon the brink of ruin, and just ready to be swallowed up. So it was in Rehoboam's time, when Shishak king of Egypt came against Judah with a vast force. Of this we read in the beginning of the 12th chapter of 2 Chronicles. So it was again in Abijah's time, when Jeroboam set the battle in array against him with eight hundred thousand chosen men; a mighty army! 2 Chron. xiii. 3. Then God wrought deliverance to Judah, out of regard to the covenant of grace established with David, as is evident by verse 4 and 5; and the victory they obtained was because the Lord was on their side, as you may see, verse 12. So it was again in Asa's time, when Zerah the Ethiopian came against him with a yet larger army of a thousand thousand and three hundred chariots, 2 Chron. xiv. 9. On this occasion Asa cried to the Lord, and trusted in him, being sensible that it was nothing with him to help those that had no power; (ver. 11.) *And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with those that have no power.* And accordingly God gave them a glorious victory over this mighty host.

So again it was in Jehoshaphat's time, when the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and the inhabitants of Mount Seir, combined together against Judah with a mighty army, a force vastly superior to any that Jehoshaphat could raise; and Jehoshaphat and his people were greatly afraid: yet they set themselves to seek God on this occasion, and trusted in him; and God told them by one of his prophets, that they need not fear them, nor should they have any occa-

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sion to fight in this battle, they should only *stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.* And according to his direction, they only stood still, and sang praises to God; and God made their enemies do the work themselves, by killing one another; and the children of Judah had nothing to do, but to gather the spoil, which was more than they could carry away. (2 Chron. xx.)

So it was again in Ahaz's time, when Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, the king of Israel, conspired against Judah, and seemed to be sure of their purpose; of which we have spoken already. So it was again in Hezekiah's time, when Sennacherib, that great king of Assyria, and head of the greatest monarchy then in the world, came up against all the fenced cities of Judah, after he had conquered most of the neighbouring countries. He sent Rabshakeh, the captain of his host, against Jerusalem, who in a very proud and scornful manner insulted Hezekiah and his people, as being sure of victory; and the people were trembling for fear, like lambs before a lion. Then God sent Isaiah the prophet to comfort them, and assure them that their enemies should not prevail; as a token of which he gave them this sign, viz. that the earth, for two years successively, should bring forth food of itself, from the roots of the old stalks, without their ploughing or sowing; and then the third year they should sow and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them, and live on the fruits of their labour, as they were wont to do before. (See 2 Kings xix. 29.) This is mentioned as a type of what is promised in verse 30, 31. *And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah, shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape, out of Mount Zion: the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.* The corn springing again after it had been cut off with the sickle, and bringing forth another crop from the roots, represents the church reviving again, and flourishing, like a plant after it had seemingly been cut down past recovery. When the enemies of the church have done their utmost, and seem to have gained their point; when they have overthrown the church, so that its being is scarcely visible, but is like a living root hid under ground; there is in it a secret life that will cause it to flourish again, and to take root downward, and bear fruit upward. This was now fulfilled. The king of Assyria had already carried captive the ten tribes; and Sennacherib had also taken all the fenced cities of Judah, and ranged the country round about, and Jerusalem only remained: and Rabshakeh had in his own imagination already swallowed that up, as he had also in the fearful apprehensions of the Jews themselves. But God wrought a wonderful deliverance;

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he sent an angel, that in one night smote an hundred fourscore and five thousand in the enemy's camp.

XIX. In the reign of Uzziah, and the following reigns, God was pleased to raise up a set of eminent prophets, who should commit their prophecies to writing, and leave them for the use of his church in all ages. We before observed, how that God began a constant succession of prophets in Israel in Samuel's time, and many of these prophets wrote by divine inspiration, and so added to the canon of scripture. But none of them are supposed to have written *books of prophecies* till now. Several of them wrote *histories* of the wonderful dispensations of God towards his church. This we have observed already of Samuel, who is supposed to have written Judges and Ruth, and part of the first of Samuel, if not the book of Joshua. And Nathan and Gad seem to have written the rest of the two books of Samuel: and Nathan with Ahijah and Iddo, wrote the history of Solomon, which is probably that which we have in the first book of Kings. The history of Israel seems to have been further carried on by Iddo and Shemaiah: 2 Chron. xii. 15. *Now the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet; and Iddo the seer, concerning genealogies?* And after that the history seems to have been further carried on by the prophet Jehu, the son of Hanani: 2 Chron. xx. 34. *Now the rest of the Acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, behold they are written in the book of Jehu, son of Hanani, who is mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel.* 1 Kings xvi. 1, 7. And then it was further continued by the prophet Isaiah: 2 Chron. xxvi. 22. *Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet the son of Amos write.* He probably did it as well in the second book of Kings, as in the book of his prophecy. And the history was carried on and finished by other prophets after him.

Thus the prophets, even from Samuel's time, had been adding to the canon of scripture by their historical writings. But now, in the days of Uzziah, did God first raise up a set of great prophets, not only to write histories, but to write books of their prophecies. The first of these is thought to be Hosea the son of Beeri, and therefore his prophecy, or the word of the Lord by him, is called the *beginning of the word of the Lord;* Hos. i. 2. *The beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea;* that is, the beginning, or the first part, of the written word of that kind, viz. that which is written in books of prophecy. He prophesied in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel. There were many other witnesses for God raised up about the same time to commit their prophecies to writing, Isaiah, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Nahum,

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and probably some others; and so from that time forward God seemed to continue a succession of *writing* prophets.

This was a great dispensation of providence, and a great advance made in the affair of redemption, which will appear, if we consider, that the main business of the prophets was to point out Christ and his redemption. They were all forerunners of the great prophet. The main end why the spirit of prophecy was given them was, that they might give testimony to Jesus Christ, the great Redeemer, who was to come. Therefore, the testimony of Jesus, and the spirit of prophecy, are spoken of as the same thing; Rev. xix. 10. *And I fell at his feet to worship him: and he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship of God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.* And therefore we find that the great and main thing that the most of the prophets in their written prophecies insist upon, is Christ and his redemption, and the glorious times of the gospel. And though many other things were spoken of in their prophecies, yet they seem to be only as introductory to their prophecy of these great things. Whatever they predict, here their prophecies commonly terminate.

These prophets, inspired by the Spirit of Christ, wrote chiefly to prepare the way for his coming, and to exhibit the glory that should follow. And in what an exalted strain do they all speak of those things! Many other things they speak of in men's usual language. But when they enter upon this subject, what a joyful heavenly sublimity is there in their language! Some of them are very particular and full in their predictions of these things, and above all the prophet Isaiah, who is therefore deservedly called the *evangelical prophet*. He seems to teach the glorious doctrines of the gospel almost as plainly as the apostles did. The apostle Paul therefore takes notice, that the prophet Esaias is very *bold*, Rom. x. 20; *i. e.* according to the meaning of the word in the New Testament, is very *plain*, he speaks out very plainly and fully; so being *very bold* is used 2 Cor. iii. 12: we use *great plainness of speech*, or *boldness*, as in the margin.

How plainly and fully does the prophet Isaiah describe the manner and circumstances, the nature and end, of the sufferings and sacrifice of Christ, in the 53d chapter of his prophecy. There is scarce a chapter in the New Testament itself which is more full upon it! and how much, and in what a glorious strain, does the same prophet speak from time to time, of the glorious benefits of Christ, the unspeakable blessings which shall redound to his church through his redemption! Jesus Christ, of whom this prophet spoke so much, once appeared to him in the form of the

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human nature, the nature he should afterwards take upon him. We have an account of it in the 6th chapter of his prophecy at the beginning: *I saw also the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple, &c.* This was Christ, as we are expressly told in the New Testament. (See John xii. 39—41.)

And if we consider the abundant prophecies of this and the other prophets, what a great increase is there of gospel light! How plentiful are the revelations and prophecies of Christ, compared with what they were in the first period of the Old Testament, from Adam to Noah; or to what they were in the second, from Noah to Abraham; or to what they were before Moses, or in the time of Moses, Joshua, and the Judges! This dispensation was also a glorious advance of the work of redemption by the great additions that were made to the canon of scripture. Great part of the Old Testament was written now from the days of Uzziah to the captivity into Babylon. And how excellent are those portions of it! What a precious treasure have those prophets committed to the church of God, tending greatly to confirm the gospel of Christ! and which has been of great comfort and benefit to God's church in all ages since, and doubtless will be to the end of the world.

PART VI.

From the Babylonish Captivity to the coming of Christ.

I COME now to the *last subordinate period* of the Old Testament, viz. that which begins with the *Babylonish captivity*, and extends to *the coming of Christ*, being near six hundred years; and shall endeavour to show how the work of redemption was carried on through this period.—But before I enter upon particulars, I would observe three things wherein this period is distinguished from the preceding ones.

1. Though we have no account of a great part of this period in the scripture history, yet the events of it are more the subject of scripture prophecy, than any of the preceding periods. There are two ways wherein the scriptures give account of the events by which the work of redemption is carried on: one is by *history*, and another is by *prophecy*: and in one or the other of these ways we have in the scriptures an

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account how the work of redemption is carried on from the beginning to the end. Although the scriptures do not contain a proper *history* of the whole, yet the whole chain of great events, by which this affair hath been carried on from the commencement to the finishing of it, is found either in history or *prophecy*. And it is to be observed, that where the scripture is wanting in one of these ways, it is made up in the other. Where scripture history fails, there prophecy takes place; so that the account is still carried on, and the chain is not broken, till we come to the very last link of it in the consummation of all things.

And accordingly it is observable of this space of time, that though it is so much less the subject of scripture history, than most of the preceding periods, (there being above four hundred years of which the scriptures give us no history,) yet its events are more the subject of prophecy, than those of all the preceding periods put together. Most of those remarkable prophecies of the book of Daniel, and most of those in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, against Babylon, Tyrus, Egypt, and many other nations, were fulfilled in this period.

Hence the reason why the scriptures give us no history of so great a part of this time, is not because the events were not so important, or less worthy of notice, than those of the foregoing periods; for they were great and remarkable. But there are several reasons which may be given for it. One is, that it was the will of God that the spirit of prophecy should cease in this period, (for reasons that may be given hereafter;) so that there were no prophets to write the history of these times; and therefore God designing this, took care that the great events of this period should not be without mention in his word. It is observable, that the *writing* prophets in Israel, were raised up at the latter end of the foregoing period, and at the beginning of this; for the time was now approaching, when, the spirit of prophecy having ceased, there was to be no inspired history, and therefore no other scripture account but what was given in prophecy.

Another reason may be, for the suspension of inspired history, that God in his providence took care, that there should be authentic and full accounts of the events of this period preserved in *profane* history. It is very worthy of notice, that with respect to the events of the five preceding subordinate periods, of which the scriptures give the history, profane history gives us no account, or at least of but very few of them. There are many fabulous and uncertain accounts of things that happened before; but the commencement of *authentic* profane history is judged to be about a hundred years before Nebuchadnezzar's time. The learned Greeks and

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Romans used to call the ages before that *the fabulous age;* but the times after that they called *the historical age.* And from about that time to the coming of Christ, we have undoubted accounts in profane history of the principal events; accounts that wonderfully agree with the many prophecies that relate to those times.

Thus the great God who disposes all things, took care to give an *historical* account of things from the beginning of the world, through all those former ages concerning which profane history is silent; and ceased not till he came to those ages in which profane history related things with some certainty. And concerning those times he gives us abundant account in *prophecy,* that by comparing profane history with those prophecies, we might see the agreement.

2. This last period of the Old Testament seems to have been remarkably distinguished from all others by great revolutions among the nations of the earth, to make way for the kingdom of Christ. The time now drawing nigh, wherein Christ, the great King and Saviour of the world, was to come, great and mighty were the changes that were brought to pass in order to it. The way had been preparing for the coming of Christ from the fall of man, through all the foregoing periods; but now, the time drawing nigh, things began to ripen apace for his coming; and therefore divine providence now wrought wonderfully. The greatest revolutions that any history has recorded, since the flood, fell out in this period. Almost all the nations far and near, within the knowledge of the Jews, were overturned again and again. All lands were in their turns subdued, captivated, and as it were emptied, and turned upside down, and that most of them repeatedly, in this period; agreeable to that prophecy, Is. xxiv. 1. *Behold the Lord maketh the earth empty; he maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.*

This began with God's visible church, in their captivity by the king of Babylon. And then the cup from them went round to all other nations, agreeable to what God revealed to the prophet Jeremiah, xxv. 15—27. Here special respect seems to be had to the great revolutions in the times of the Babylonish empire. But after that there were three general overturnings before Christ came, in the succession of the three great monarchies of the world, after the Babylonish empire. The king of Babylon is represented in scripture as overturning the world: but after that, the Babylonish empire was overthrown by Cyrus, who founded the Persian empire in the room of it; which was of much greater extent than the Babylonish empire in its greatest glory. Thus the world was overturned the second time. And then, the Persian

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empire was overthrown by Alexander, and the Grecian set up, which was still of much greater extent than the Persian. And thus there was a general overturning of the world a third time. After that, the Grecian empire was overthrown by the Romans, and the Roman empire was established; which vastly exceeded all the foregoing empires in power and extent of dominion. And so the world was overturned the fourth time.

These several monarchies, and the great revolutions of the world under them, are abundantly spoken of in the prophecies of Daniel. They are represented in Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold, silver, brass, and iron, and Daniel's interpretation of it, (Dan. ii.) in the vision of the four beasts, and the angel's interpretation of it, (Dan. vii.) And the succession of the Persian and Grecian monarchies is more particularly represented in the 8th chapter, in Daniel's vision of the ram and the he-goat, and again in the 11th chapter.

Beside these four general overturnings, the world was kept in a constant tumult between whiles; and indeed in a continual convulsion through this whole period. Before, the face of the earth was comparatively in quietness; though there were many great wars among the nations, yet we read of no such mighty and universal convulsions and overturnings as there were in this period. The nations of the world, most of them, had long remained on their lees, without being emptied from vessel to vessel, as is said of Moab, Jer. xlviii. 11. Now these great overturnings were because the time of the great Messiah drew nigh. That they were to prepare the way for Christ's coming, is evident by scripture, particularly by Ezek. xxi. 27. *I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is, and I will give it him.* The prophet, by repeating the word *overturn* three times, has respect to three overturnings, as in the Revelation, viii. 13. The repetition of the word *woe* three times, signifies three distinct woes; as appears by what follows, ix. 12. *One woe is past;* and xi. 14. *The second woe is past, and behold the third woe cometh quickly.*

It must be noted, that the prophet Ezekiel prophesied in the time of the Babylonish captivity; and therefore there were three great and general overturnings to come after this prophecy, before Christ came; the first by the Persians, the second by the Grecians, the third by the Romans; and then Christ, whose right it was to take the diadem, and reign, should come. Here these great overturnings are evidently spoken of as preparatory to the coming and kingdom of Christ. But to understand the words aright, we must note the particular expression, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it," i. e. the diadem and crown of Israel, or the supreme

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temporal dominion over God's visible people. This God said should be no more, *i. e.* the crown should be taken off, and the diadem removed, as it is said in the foregoing verse. The supreme power over Israel should be no more in the royal line of David, to which it properly belonged, but should be removed away, and given to others, and overturned from one to another; first the supreme power over Israel should be in the hands of the Persians; then it should be overturned, and be in the hands of the Grecians; and then it should be overturned again, and come into the hands of the Romans, and be no more in the line of David, till that very person should come who was the son of David, whose proper right it was, and then God would give it to him.

That those great shakings and revolutions of the nations of the world, were all to prepare the way for Christ's coming, and setting up his kingdom in the world, is further manifest by Haggai ii. 6, 7. *For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land: and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.* And again, ver. 21—23. It is evident by this, that these great revolutions and shakings of the nations, whereby the thrones of kingdoms and their armies were overthrown, and every one came down by the sword of his brother, were to prepare the way for the coming of him who is the desire of all nations.

The great changes and troubles that have sometimes been in the visible church of Christ, (Rev. xi. 2,) are compared to the church's being in travail to bring forth Christ; so these great troubles and mighty revolutions, were, as it were, the world's being in travail to bring forth the Son of God. The apostle, in the 8th of Romans, represents the whole creation as groaning and travailing in pain together until now, to bring forth the liberty and manifestation of the children of God.—So the world, as it were, travailed in pain, and was in continual convulsions, for several hundred years together, to bring forth the first-born child, and the only begotten Son of God. And those mighty revolutions were as so many pangs and throes in order to it. The world being so long a time kept in a state of war and bloodshed, prepared the way for the coming of the Prince of peace, as it showed the great need the world stood in of such a prince, to deliver the world from its miseries.

It pleased God to order it in his providence, that earthly power and dominion should be raised to its greatest height, and appear in its utmost glory, in those four great monarchies that succeeded one another, and that every one should be greater and more glorious than the preceding, before he set

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up the kingdom of his Son. By this it appeared how much more glorious his spiritual kingdom was than the most glorious temporal kingdom. The strength and glory of Satan's kingdom in these four mighty monarchies, appeared in its greatest height: for, being the monarchies of the Heathen world, the strength of them was the strength of Satan's kingdom. God suffered Satan's kingdom to rise to so great a height of power and magnificence before his Son came to overthrow it, in order to prepare the way for the more glorious triumph of his Son. Goliath must have on all his splendid armour when the stripling David comes against him with a sling and a stone for the greater glory of David's victory. God suffered one of those great monarchies to subdue another, and erect itself on the others' ruins, appearing still in greater strength, and the last to be the strongest and mightiest of all; that so Christ, in overthrowing that, might as it were overthrow them all at once. The stone cut out of the mountain without hands, is represented as destroying the whole image, the gold, the silver, the brass, the iron, and the clay; so that all became as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor.

These mighty empires were suffered thus to overthrow the world, and destroy one another. And though their power was so great, yet they could not uphold themselves, but fell one after another, and came to nothing; even the last of them, which was the strongest, and had swallowed up the earth. It pleased God thus to show in them the instability and vanity of all earthly power and greatness; which served as a foil to set forth the glory of the kingdom of his Son, which never shall be destroyed, Dan. ii. 44. *In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.* So greatly does this kingdom differ from all those kingdoms: they vanish away, and are left to other people; but this shall not be so left, but shall stand for ever. God suffered the devil to do his utmost, and to establish his interest, by setting up the greatest, strongest, and most glorious kingdoms in the world, before the despised Jesus overthrew him and his empire. Christ came into the world to bring down the high things of Satan's kingdom, that the hand of the Lord might be on every one that is proud and lofty, and every high tower, and every lofty mountain; as the prophet Isaiah says, chap. ii. 12, &c. And therefore these things were suffered to rise very high, that Christ might appear so much the more glorious in being above them. Thus wonderfully did the great and wise governor of the world prepare the way for the erecting of the glorious kingdom of his beloved son Jesus.

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3. Another thing for which this last space of time before Christ was particularly remarkable, was the wonderful preservation of the church through all those overturnings. The preservation of the church was on some accounts more remarkable through this period, than through any of the foregoing. It was very wonderful that the church, which now was so weak, and in so low a state, and mostly subject to the dominion of Heathen monarchies, should be preserved for five or six hundred years together, while the world was so often overturned, and the earth was rent in pieces, and made so often empty and waste, and the inhabitants of it came down so often every one by the sword of his brother. I say, it was wonderful that the church in its weak and low state, being but a little handful of men, should be preserved in all these great convulsions; especially considering that the land of Judea, the chief place of the church's residence, lay in the midst of the contending parties, was very much the seat of war amongst them, and was often over-run and subdued. It was sometimes in the hands of one people, and sometimes another, and very much the object of the envy and hatred of all heathen nations. It was often almost ruined by them, often great multitudes of its inhabitants being slain, and the land in a great measure depopulated; and those who had them in their power, often intended the utter destruction of the whole nation. Yet they were upheld; they were preserved in their captivity in Babylon, in all the dangers they passed through under the kings of Persia, in the much greater dangers under the empire of the Greeks, and afterwards when the world was trodden down by the Romans.

Their preservation through this period was also peculiarly remarkable, in that we never read of the church suffering persecution in any former period in any measure to such a degree as they did in this, under Antiochus Epiphanes, of which more afterwards. This wonderful preservation of the church through all these overturnings of the world, gives light and confirmation to what we read in the beginning of the 46th Psalm: *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.—Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar, and be troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.* Thus I have taken notice of some *general* things wherein this last period of the Old Testament times was distinguished. I come now to consider how the work of redemption was carried on in *particulars.*

I. The first thing that here offers, is the captivity of the Jews into Babylon. This was a great dispensation of provi-

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dence, and such as never was before. The children of Israel in the time of the Judges, had often been brought under their enemies; and many particular persons were carried captive at other times. But never had there been any such thing as destroying the whole land, the sanctuary, and the city of Jerusalem, and all the cities and villages of the land, and carrying the whole body of the people out of their own land into a country many hundred miles distant, and leaving the land of Canaan empty of God's visible people. The ark had once forsaken the tabernacle of Shiloh, and was carried captive into the land of the Philistines: but never had there been any such thing as burning the sanctuary, utterly destroying the ark, carrying away all the sacred vessels and utensils, breaking up all their stated worship in the land, and the land lying waste and empty for so many years together. How lively are those things set forth in the Lamentations of Jeremiah! The work of redemption was promoted by this remarkable dispensation in these following ways.

1. It finally cured that nation of their idolatry. The prophet Isaiah, speaking of the setting up of the kingdom of Christ, (chap. ii. 18,) speaks of the abolishing of idolatry as one thing that should be done to this end: *And the idols he shall utterly abolish.* When the time was drawing near, that God would abolish Heathen idolatry, through the greater part of the known world, as he did by the preaching of the gospel, it pleased him first to abolish Heathenism among his own people; which he did by their captivity into Babylon. This was a presage of that abolition of idols, which God was about to bring to pass by Christ through so great a part of the Heathen world.

This nation, that was addicted to idolatry for so many ages, notwithstanding all reproofs, warnings, corrections, and all the judgments God inflicted on them for it; were now finally cured. So that however some might fall into this sin afterwards, as they did about the time of Antiochus' persecution, yet the nation, as a nation, never shewed any propensity to this sin any more. This was a remarkable and wonderful change in that people, and what directly promoted the work of redemption, as it was a great advancement of the interest of religion.

2. One thing that prepared the way for Christ's coming, and for setting up the glorious dispensation of the gospel, was the taking away many of those things wherein consisted the glory of the Jewish dispensation. In order to introduce the glorious dispensation of the gospel, the external glory of the Jewish church must be diminished. This the Babylonish captivity did many ways.

First, it removed the temporal dominion of the house of

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David, *i. e.* the supreme and independent government of themselves. It took away the crown and diadem from the nation. The time now approaching when Christ, the great and everlasting king of his church, was to reign, it was time for the typical kings to withdraw. As God said by Ezekiel, ch. xxi. 26. *He removed the crown and diadem, that it might be no more, till he should come whose right it was.* The Jews henceforward were always dependent on the governing power of other nations, until Christ came, for near six hundred years; except about ninety years, during which space they maintained a sort of independence by continual wars under the dominion of the Maccabees and their posterity.

Again, by the captivity, the glory and magnificence of the temple was taken away, and the temple that was built afterwards, was nothing in comparison with it. Thus it was meet, that when the time drew nigh that the glorious antetype of the temple should appear, that the typical temple should have its glory withdrawn.

Moreover, they lost by the captivity the two tables of the testimony delivered to Moses, on which God with his own finger wrote the ten commandments on Mount Sinai. These seem to have been preserved in the ark till the captivity.—These were in the ark when Solomon placed the ark in the temple, 1 Kings viii. 9. *There was nothing in the ark, save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb.* We have no reason to suppose any other, but that they remained there as long as that temple stood. But the Jews speak of these as finally lost at that time; though the same commandments were preserved in the book of the law. These tables also were withdrawn on the approach of their antetype.

Another thing that was lost was the Urim and Thummim. This is evident by Ezra ii. 63. *And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there should stand up a priest with Urim and Thummim.* We have no account that this was ever restored; though the ancient writings of the Jews say the contrary. What this Urim and Thummim was, I shall not now inquire; but only observe, that it was something by which the high priest inquired of God, and received immediate answers from him, or by which God gave forth immediate oracles on particular occasions. This was now withdrawn, the time approaching when Christ, the antetype of the Urim and Thummim, the great word and oracle of God, was to come.

Another thing that the ancient Jews say was wanting in the second temple, was the Shechinah, or cloud of glory over the mercy-seat. This was promised to be in the tabernacle: Levit. xvi. 2. *For I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat.* And we read elsewhere of the cloud of glory descending

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into the tabernacle, Exod. xl. 35; and so we do likewise with respect to Solomon's temple. But we have no account that this cloud of glory was in the second temple. And the ancient accounts of the Jews say, that there was no such thing in the second temple. This was needless in the second temple, considering that God had promised that he would fill this temple with glory another way, viz. by Christ's coming into it; which was afterwards fulfilled. See Haggai ii. 7. *I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.*

When Moses built the tabernacle and altar in the wilderness, and the first sacrifices were offered on it, fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering, as in Levit. ix. 24; also when Solomon built the temple, and offered the first sacrifices, 2 Chron. vii. 1. And this fire was never to go out, but to be kept alive with the greatest care, as God commanded, Levit. vi. 13. *The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.* And there is no reason to suppose the fire kindled in Solomon's time ever went out till the temple was destroyed by the Babylonians. But then it was extinguished, and never was restored. We have no account of its being given on building the second temple, as we have at the building of the tabernacle and first temple. But the Jews, after their return, were forced to make use of their common fire instead of it, according to the ancient tradition of the Jews. Thus the lights of the Old Testament go out on the approach of the glorious Sun of righteousness.

3. The captivity into Babylon occasioned the dispersion of the Jews through the greater part of the known world, before the coming of Christ. For the whole nation being carried away far out of their own land, and continuing in a state of captivity for so long a time, they got possessions, built houses, and settled themselves in the land of their captivity, agreeable to the direction that Jeremiah gave them, (Jer. xxix.) And therefore, when Cyrus gave them liberty to return to the land where they had formerly dwelt, many of them never returned; they were not willing to leave their settlements and possessions there, to go into a desolate country, many hundred miles distant, which none but the old men among them had ever seen; and therefore they were but a small number that returned, as we see in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Great numbers tarried behind, though they still retained the same religion with those that returned, so far as it could be practised in a foreign land. Those messengers that we read of in the 7th chapter of Zechariah, that came to inquire of the priests and prophets in Jerusalem, Sherezer and Regemelech, are supposed to be messengers sent from the Jews that remained still in Babylon.

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Those Jews who remained in that country were soon, by the great changes that happened in the world, dispersed thence into all the adjacent countries. Hence we find, that in Esther's time, which was after the return from the captivity, the Jews were dispersed throughout all parts of the vast Persian empire, which extended from India to Ethiopia; Esth. iii. 8. *And Haman said unto King Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad, and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom, &c.* And so they continued dispersed till Christ came, and till the apostles went forth to preach the gospel. But yet these dispersed Jews retained their religion. Their captivity, as before observed, thoroughly cured them of their idolatry; and it was their manner, as many of them as could, to go up to Jerusalem at their great feasts. Hence we read in the 2d chapter of Acts, that at the great feast of Pentecost, there were Jews abiding at Jerusalem out of every nation under heaven. These had come up from all countries where they were dispersed, to worship at that feast. And hence we find, in their history, that wherever the apostles went preaching through the world, they found Jews. They came to one city, and to another city, and went into the synagogue of the Jews.

Antiochus the Great, about two hundred years before Christ, on a certain occasion, transplanted two thousand families of Jews from the country about Babylon into Asia the Less; and so they and their posterity, many of them, settled in Pontus, Galatia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, and in Ephesus; and from thence settled in Athens, and Corinth, and Rome. Whence came the synagogues in those places in which the apostle Paul preached.—Now, this dispersion of the Jews through the world before Christ came, did many ways prepare the way for his coming, and setting up his kingdom in the world.

This was a means of raising a general expectation of the Messiah through the world, about the time that he actually came. For the Jews, wherever they were dispersed, carried the holy scriptures with them, and so the prophecies of the Messiah; and being conversant with the nations among whom they lived, they, by that means, became acquainted with these prophecies, and with the expectations of the Jews concerning their glorious Messiah. Hence, the birth of such a glorious person in Judea, about that time, began to be the general expectation of all nations, as appears by the writings of learned Heathens, which are still extant; particularly the famous poet Virgil, who lived in Italy a little before Christ, has a poem about the expectation of a great prince that was to be born, and the happy times of righteousness and peace he was to introduce; some of it very much in the language of the prophet Isaiah.

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Another way by which this dispersed state of the Jews prepared the way for Christ was, that it shewed the necessity of abolishing the Jewish dispensation, and introducing a new dispensation of the covenant of grace. It shewed the necessity of abolishing the ceremonial law, and the old Jewish worship: for, by this means, the observance of that ceremonial law became impracticable even by the Jews themselves. The ceremonial law was adapted to the state of a people dwelling together in the same land, where was the city which God had chosen; where was the temple, the only place where they might offer sacrifices; and where alone it was lawful for their priests and Levites to officiate, where they were to bring their first fruits, where were their cities of refuge and the like. But by this dispersion many of the Jews lived more than a thousand miles distant, when Christ came; which made the observance of their laws of sacrifices, and the like, impracticable. And though their forefathers might be to blame in not going up to the land of Judea when they were permitted by Cyrus, yet the case was now, as to many of them at least, become impracticable; which shewed the necessity of introducing a new dispensation, that should be fitted, not only to one particular land, but to the general circumstances and use of all nations of the world.

Again, this universal dispersion of the Jews contributed to make the facts concerning Jesus Christ publicly known through the world. For, as observed before, the Jews who lived in other countries, used frequently to go up to Jerusalem at their three great feasts, from year to year; by which means, they could not but become acquainted with the wonderful things that Christ did in that land. We find that the great miracle of raising Lazarus excited the curiosity of those foreign Jews who came up at the feast of the Passover to see Jesus; John xii. 19—21. These Greeks were foreign Jews and proselytes, as is evident by their coming to worship at the feast of the Passover. The Jews who lived abroad among the Greeks, and spoke their language, were called *Greeks*, *Hellenists*, and *Grecians*, Acts vi. 1. These were not Gentile Christians; for this occurred before the calling of the Gentiles.

By the same means the Jews who went up from other countries became acquainted with Christ's crucifixion. Thus the disciples going to Emmaus say to Christ, whom they did not know, (Luke xxiv. 18.) *Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which have come to pass there in these days;* plainly intimating, that the things concerning Jesus were so publicly known to all men, that it was wonderful to find any man unacquainted with them. And so afterwards they became acquainted with the news of his resurrection; and when they returned into their own countries, they carried the news with them, and made these *facts* public

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through the world, as before they had made the *prophecies* of them.

After this, those foreign Jews who came to Jerusalem, took great notice of the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost, and the wonderful effects of it; and many of them were converted by it. There were Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Egypt, and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and the strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians. And so they not only carried back the news of these facts, but Christianity itself, into their own countries with them; which contributed much to the spreading of it through the world.

Again, the dispersion of the Jews opened a door for the introduction of the apostles in all places where they came to preach the gospel. For almost in all places where they came to preach the gospel, they found synagogues of the Jews, where the holy scriptures were wont to be read, and the true God worshipped; which was a great advantage to the apostles in spreading the gospel through the world. For their way was, into whatever city they came, first to go into the synagogue of the Jews, (they being of the same nation,) and there to preach the gospel unto them. And hereby their new doctrine was taken notice of by their Gentile neighbours, whose curiosity excited them to hear what they had to say; which became a fair occasion to the apostles to preach the gospel to them. This is the account we have in the Acts of the Apostles. And these Gentiles had been before, many of them, prepared in some measure, by the knowledge they had of the Jewish religion, of their worship of one God, their prophecies, and expectation of a Messiah. This knowledge they derived from the Jews, who had long been their neighbours; which opened the door for the gospel to have access to them. And the work of the apostles with them was doubtless much easier, than if they never had heard any thing before of such a person as the apostles preached, or any thing about the worship of one only true God. So many ways did the Babylonish captivity greatly prepare the way for Christ's coming.

II. The next particular that I would notice is, the addition made to the canon of scripture in the time of the captivity, in those two remarkable portions of scripture, the prophecies of Ezekiel and Daniel. Christ appeared to each of these prophets in the form of that nature which he was afterwards to take upon him. The prophet Ezekiel gives an account of his thus appearing to him repeatedly, as Ezek. i. 26. *And above the firmament that was over their heads, was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire-stone, and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it*; and so chap. viii. 1, 2. So Christ appeared

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to the prophet Daniel: Dan. viii. 15, 16. *There stood before me as the appearance of a man. And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.* There are several things which make it evident, that this was Christ; but I cannot now stand to mention particulars. Christ appeared again as a man to this prophet, Dan. x. 5, 6. *Then I lift up mine eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: his body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.* Comparing this vision with that of the apostle John, in the 1st chapter of Revelation, makes it manifest that this person was Christ. And the prophet Daniel, in the historical part of his book, gives an account of a very remarkable appearance of Christ in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Dan. iii. 25. *Lo, I see four* MEN *loose,—and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.*

Christ not only appeared here in the form of the human nature, but he appeared in a furnace, saving those persons who believed on him from that furnace; by which is represented to us, how Christ, by coming himself into the furnace of God's wrath, saves those that believe in him from that furnace, so that it has no power on them; and the wrath of God never reaches or touches them, so much as to singe the hair of their head.

These two prophets, in many respects, were more particular concerning the coming of Christ, and his glorious gospel-kingdom, than any of the prophets had been before. They mention those three great overturnings of the world that should be before he came. Ezekiel is particular in several places concerning the coming of Christ. The prophet Daniel is more particular in foretelling the time of Christ's coming than ever any prophet had been before, (chap. ix.) He foretold, that it should be seventy weeks, *i. e.* seventy weeks of years, or seventy times seven years, which is four hundred and ninety years, from the decree to rebuild and restore the state of the Jews, till the Messiah should be crucified. This must be reckoned from the commission given to Ezra by Artaxerxes, whereby the very particular time of Christ's crucifixion was pointed out, which never had been before. (Ezra vii.)

The prophet Ezekiel is very particular in the mystical description of the gospel-church, in his vision of the temple and city, towards the latter part of his prophecy. The prophet Daniel points out the order of particular events that should come to pass relating to the Christian church after Christ was come, as the rise of Antichrist, the continuance

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of his reign, his fall, and the glory that should follow. Thus does the gospel-light still increase, the nearer we come to the time of Christ's birth.

III. The next particular I would mention is, the destruction of Babylon, and the overthrow of the Chaldean empire by Cyrus. The destruction of Babylon took place on that night in which Belshazzar the king, and the city in general, were drowned in a drunken festival, which they kept in honour of their gods, when Daniel was called to read the handwriting on the wall, Dan. v. 30; and it was brought about in such a manner, as wonderfully to show the hand of God, and remarkably to fulfil his word by his prophets, which I cannot now stand particularly to relate. Now that great city, which had long been an enemy to the city of God, was destroyed, after it had stood ever since the first building of Babel, which was about seventeen hundred years. If the check which was put to the building of this city at its beginning, whereby they were prevented from carrying it to that extent and magnificence they intended, promoted the work of redemption, much more did this destruction of it.

This was a remarkable instance of God's vengeance on the enemies of his redeemed church; for God brought destruction on Babylon for the injuries they did to God's children, as is often set forth in the prophets. It also promoted the work of redemption, as thereby God's people who were held captive by them, were set at liberty to return to their own land in order to rebuild Jerusalem; and therefore Cyrus is called God's shepherd, Is. xliv. and xlv. 1. And these are over and above those ways wherein the setting up and overthrowing the four monarchies of the world did promote the work of redemption.

IV. What next followed was the return of the Jews to their own land, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple. Cyrus, as soon as he had destroyed the Babylonish, and erected the Persian empire on its ruins, made a decree in favour of the Jews, that they might return to their own land, and rebuild their city and temple. This return of the Jews out of the Babylonish captivity is, next to the redemption out of Egypt, the most remarkable of all the Old Testament redemptions, and most insisted on in scripture, as a type of the great redemption of Jesus Christ. It was under the hand of one of the legal ancestors of Christ, viz. Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, whose Babylonish name was Sheshbazzar. He was the governor of the Jews, and their leader in their first return out of captivity; and, together with Joshua the son of Josedek the high priest, had the chief hand in rebuilding the temple. This redemption was brought about by the hand of Zerubbabel and Joshua the priest, as the redemption

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out of Egypt was brought about by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

The return out of the captivity was a remarkable dispensation of Providence. It was remarkable, that the heart of a Heathen prince, Cyrus, should be so inclined to favour such a design. He not only gave the people liberty to return, and rebuild the city and temple, but gave charge that they should be helped with silver and gold, with goods and beasts, as we read in Ezra i. 4. And afterwards God wonderfully inclined the heart of Darius to further the building of the house of God with his own tribute-money, and gave command to their bitter enemies, the Samaritans, who had been striving to hinder them, to help them without fail, by furnishing them with all that they needed in order to it, and to supply them day by day. He made a decree, that whosoever failed of it, timber should be pulled down out of his house, and he hanged thereon, and his house made a dunghill, (Ezra vi.) After this, God inclined the heart of Artaxerxes, another king of Persia, to promote the work of preserving the state of the Jews, by his ample commission to Ezra, (Ezra vii.) He helped them abundantly with silver and gold out of his own bounty, and offered more, as should be needful, out of the king's treasure-house, commanding his treasurers beyond the river Euphrates to give more, as should be needed, unto a hundred talents of silver, a hundred measures of wheat, a hundred baths of wine, a hundred baths of oil, and salt, without prescribing how much. He gave leave to establish magistrates in the land; freeing the priests of toll, tribute, custom, and other things, which render this decree by Artaxerxes the most full and ample in the Jews' favour of any that had been given for the restoring of Jerusalem; and therefore, in Daniel's prophecy, this is called *the decree* for restoring and building Jerusalem; and hence the seventy weeks are dated.

After this, another favourable commission was granted by the king of Persia to Nehemiah, (chap. ii.)—It was remarkable, that the hearts of Heathen princes should be so inclined. It was the effect of *his* power, who hath the hearts of kings in his hands, and turneth them whithersoever he will; and it was a remarkable instance of his favour to his people.

Another remarkable circumstance of this restitution of the state of the Jews to their own land was, that it was accomplished against so much opposition of their bitter indefatigable enemies, the Samaritans, who, for a long time together, with all the malice and craft they could exercise, opposed the Jews in this affair, and sought their destruction. One while they were opposed by Bishlam, Mithridath, Tabeel, Rehum, and Shimshai, as in Ezra iv.; and then by Tatnai, Shetharboznai, and their companions, as in chap. v.; and after-

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wards by Sanballat and Tobiah, as we read in the book of Nehemiah.

We have shewed before, how the settlement of the people in this land in Joshua's time promoted the work of redemption. On the same accounts does their restitution belong to the same work. The re-settlement of the Jews in the land of Canaan belongs to this work, as it was a necessary means of preserving the Jewish church and dispensation in being, till Christ should come. If it had not been for this restoration of the Jewish church, temple, and worship, the people had remained without any temple, or land of their own, that should be as it were their head-quarters, a place of worship, habitation, and resort. The whole constitution, which God had done so much to establish, would have been in danger of utterly failing, long before the six hundred years had expired, which was from about the time of the captivity till Christ. And so all that preparation which God had been making for the coming of Christ, from the time of Abraham, would have been in vain. Now that very temple was built that God would fill with glory by Christ's coming into it, as the prophets Haggai and Zechariah told the Jews in order to encourage them in building it.

V. The next particular I would observe, is the addition made to the canon of the scriptures soon after the captivity by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, who were prophets sent to encourage the people in their work of rebuilding the city and temple; and the main argument they use to that end, is the approach of the coming of Christ. Haggai foretold that Christ should be of Zerubbabel's legal posterity. This seems to be the last and most particular revelation of the descent of Christ, till the angel Gabriel was sent to reveal it to his mother Mary.

VI. The next thing I would take notice of, was the pouring out of the Spirit of God that accompanied the ministry of Ezra the priest after the captivity. That there was such an effusion of the Spirit of God, that accompanied Ezra's ministry, is manifest by many things in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Presently after Ezra came up from Babylon, with the ample commission which Artaxerxes gave him, whence Daniel's seventy weeks began, he set himself to reform the vices and corruptions he found among the Jews; and his great success in it we have an account of in the 10th chapter of Ezra. So that there appeared a very general and great mourning of the congregation of Israel for their sins, which was accompanied with a solemn covenant that the people entered into with God; and this was followed with a great and general reformation, as we have there an account. And the people about the same time, with great zeal, earnestness, and reve-

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rence, gathered themselves together to hear the word of God read by Ezra; and gave diligent attention, while Ezra and the other priests preached to them, by reading and expounding the law, and were greatly affected in the hearing of it. They wept when they heard the words of the law, and set themselves to observe it, and kept the feast of tabernacles, as the scripture observes, after such a manner as it had not been kept since the days of Joshua the son of Nun, (Nehem. viii.) After this, having separated themselves from all strangers, they solemnly observed a fast, by hearing the word, confessing their sins, and renewing their covenant with God. And they manifested their sincerity in that transaction, by actually reforming many abuses in religion and morals; as we learn from the 9th and following chapters of Nehemiah.

It is observable, that it has been God's manner, in every remarkable new establishment of the state of his visible church, to afford a remarkable outpouring of his Spirit. So it was on the first establishment of the church of the Jews at their coming into Canaan under Joshua; so it was now in this second settlement of the church in the time of Ezra; and so it was on the first establishment of the Christian church after Christ's resurrection; God wisely and graciously laying the foundation of those establishments in a work of the holy Spirit, for the lasting benefit of his church, thenceforward continued in those establishments. And this pouring out of the Spirit was a final cure of the nation of that particular sin which just before they especially run into, viz. intermarrying with the Gentiles: for however inclined to it they were before, they ever after shewed an aversion to it.

VII. Ezra added to the canon of the scriptures. He wrote the book of Ezra; and he is supposed to have written the two books of Chronicles, at least of compiling them, if he was not the author of the materials, or all the parts of these writings. That these books were written, or compiled and completed, after the captivity, the things contained in the books themselves make manifest; for the genealogies contained therein, are brought down below the captivity; as 1 Chron. iii. 17, &c. We have there an account of the posterity of Jehoiachin for several successive generations. And there is mention in these books of this captivity into Babylon, as of a thing past, and of things that were done on the return of the Jews after the captivity, (1 Chron. ix.) The chapter is mostly filled up with an account of things that came to pass *after* the captivity into Babylon, as you may see by comparing it with what is said in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. And that Ezra was the person who compiled these books, is probable by this, because they conclude with words that we know are the

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words of Ezra's history. The two last verses are Ezra's words in the history he gives in the two first verses of the book of Ezra.

VIII. Ezra is supposed to have collected all the books of which the holy scriptures did then consist, and disposed them in their proper order. Ezra is often spoken of as a noted and eminent scribe of the law of God, and the canon of scripture in his time was manifestly under his special care. The Jews, from the first accounts we have from them, have always held, that the canon of scripture, so much of it as was then extant, was collected, and orderly disposed and settled by Ezra; and that from him they have delivered it down in the order in which he disposed it, till Christ's time; when the Christian church received it from them, and have delivered it down to our times. The truth of this is allowed as undoubtedly by divines in general.

IX. The work of redemption was carried on and promoted in this period, by greatly multiplying the copies of the law, and appointing the constant public reading of them in all the cities of Israel in their synagogues. It is evident, that before the captivity, there were but few copies of the law. The original was laid up beside the ark; and the kings were required to write out a copy of it for their use, and the law was required to be read to the whole congregation of Israel once every seventh year. And we have no account of any other stated public reading of the law before the captivity but this. And it is manifest by several things that might be mentioned, that copies of the law were exceeding rare before the captivity. But after this, the constant reading of the law was set up in every synagogue throughout the land. First, they began with reading the law, and then they proceeded to establish the constant reading of the other books of the Old Testament. And lessons were read out of the Old Testament, as made up of both the law and the other parts of the scripture then extant, in all the synagogues, which were set up in every city, and wherever the Jews in any considerable number dwelt. Thus we find it was in the time of Christ and the apostles. Acts xv. 21. *Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day.* This custom is universally supposed, both by Jews and Christians, to be begun by Ezra. There were doubtless public assemblies before the captivity. They used to assemble at the temple at their great feasts, and were directed, when they were at a loss about any thing in the law, to go to the priest for instruction; and they used also to resort to the prophets' houses: and we read of synagogues in the land before, Psal. lxxiv. 8. But it is not supposed that they had copies of the law for constant public reading and expounding through the land before,

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This was one great means of their being preserved from idolatry.

X. The next thing I would mention is, God's remarkably preserving the church and nation of the Jews, when they were in imminent danger of being universally destroyed by Haman, as in the book of Esther. This series of providence was very wonderful in preventing this destruction. Esther was doubtless born for this end to be the instrument of this remarkable preservation.

XI. After this the canon of scripture was further enlarged in the books of Nehemiah and Esther; the one by Nehemiah himself. Whether the other was written by Nehemiah, or Mordecai, or Malachi, is not of importance for us to know, so long as it is one of those books that were always admitted and received as a part of their canon by the Jews, and was among those books which the Jews called their scriptures in Christ's time, and as such was approved by him. For Christ often in his speeches to the Jews, manifestly approves and confirms those books, which amongst them went by the name of the *Scriptures*, as might easily be shown.

XII. After this the canon of the Old Testament was completed and sealed by Malachi. The manner of his concluding his prophecy seems to imply, that they were to expect no more prophecies, and no more written revelations from God, till Christ should come. For in the last chapter he prophesies of Christ's coming; ver. 2, 3. *But unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be as ashes under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.* Then we read in ver. 4. *Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments; i. e.* Remember and improve what ye have; keep close to your written rule, as expecting no more additions to it, till the night of the Old Testament is over, and the Sun of righteousness shall at length arise.

XIII. Soon after this, the spirit of prophecy ceased among that people till the time of the New Testament. Thus the Old Testament light, the stars of the long night, began apace to hide their heads, the time of the Sun of righteousness now drawing nigh. We before observed, how the kings of the house of David ceased before the true king and head of the church came; and how the cloud of glory withdrew, before Christ, the brightness of the Father's glory, appeared. And now the spirit of prophecy ceased. The time of the great Prophet of God was now so nigh, it was time for their typical prophets to be silent.

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We have now gone through the time of which we have any historical account in the writings of the Old Testament; and the last thing mentioned, by which the work of redemption was promoted, was the ceasing of the spirit of prophecy. —I now proceed to show how the work of redemption was carried on through the remaining times before Christ. In this we have not that thread of scripture history to guide us that we have had hitherto; but have these three things, viz. the prophecies of the Old Testament, human histories, and some occasional evidence of things which happened in those times, in the New Testament. Therefore,

XIV. The next particular that I shall mention under this period is, the destruction of the Persian empire, and setting up of the Grecian empire by Alexander. This came to pass about sixty or seventy years after the times wherein the prophet Malachi is supposed to have prophesied, and about three hundred and thirty years before Christ. This was the third revolution that came to pass in this period, and was greater and more remarkable than either of the foregoing. It was very remarkable on account of the suddenness of that conquest which Alexander made, and the greatness of the empire he set up, which much exceeded in extent all the foregoing.

This event is much spoken of in the prophecies of Daniel. This empire is represented by the third kingdom of brass in Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Dan. ii. And in Daniel's vision of the four beasts, it is represented by the third beast that was like a leopard, that had on his back four wings of a fowl, to represent the swiftness of its conquest, chap. viii.; and is more particularly represented by the he-goat in the 8th chapter, that came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground, to represent how swiftly Alexander over-ran the world. The angel himself expressly interprets this he-goat to signify the king of Grecia, ver. 21. *The rough goat is the king of Grecia; and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king*, i. e. Alexander himself.

After Alexander had conquered the world, he soon died; and his dominion did not descend to his posterity, but four of his principal captains divided his empire between them. Now that being broken, and four stood up for it, four kingdoms stand up out of the nation, but not in his power; as in the 11th chapter of Daniel. The angel after foretelling the Persian empire, proceeds to foretel Alexander, ver. 3. *And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.* Then he foretells, in the 4th verse, the dividing of his kingdom between his four captains: *And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven;*

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and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others besides those. Of these four captains, one had Egypt and the neighbouring countries on the *south* of Judea; and another had Syria and the neighbouring countries *north* of Judea; and these two are called *the kings of the north and of the south.* (Dan. xi.)

Now this setting up of the Grecian empire did greatly prepare the way for Christ's coming, and for the erection of his kingdom. Besides the ways common to others in this period, there is one peculiar to this revolution, which remarkably promoted the work of redemption; and that was, that it made the Greek language common in the world. To have one common language understood and used through the greater part of the world, must greatly prepare the way for the setting up of Christ's kingdom. This gave advantage for spreading the gospel through all nations, with vastly greater ease, than if every nation had a distinct language, and did not understand each other. For though some of the first preachers of the gospel had the gift of tongues, so that they could preach in any language; yet all had not this particular gift: and they who had could not exercise it when they would, but only at special seasons, when the Spirit of God was pleased to inspire them in this way. And the churches in different and distant parts of the world, as at Jerusalem, Antioch, Galatia, Corinth, &c. could not have had that communication of which we have an account in the book of *Acts*, without a common language.—After the Grecian empire was set up, many in all these countries well understood the Greek language; which wonderfully opened the door for mutual communication between those churches which were so far separated from one another.

Again, making the Greek language common through so great a part of the world, did wonderfully make way for the kingdom of Christ, because it was the language in which the New Testament was to be originally written. The apostles propagated the gospel through many scores of nations; and if those nations could not have understood the Bible any otherwise than as it was translated into so many languages, it would have rendered the spreading of the gospel vastly more difficult. But by the Greek being made common to all, they all understood the New Testament of Jesus Christ in the language in which the apostles and evangelists originally wrote it. As soon as ever it was written by its original penmen, it immediately lay open to the world in a language that was commonly understood.

XV. The next thing I notice is the translating of the Old Testament into the Greek language, which was commonly

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understood by the Gentiles. This is commonly called the Septuagint, or the translation of the seventy; and is supposed to have been made about fifty or sixty years after Alexander's conquests. This is the first translation that ever was made of the scriptures that we have any credible account of. The canon of the Old Testament had been completed by the prophet Malachi but about an hundred and twenty years before in its original. Hitherto the scriptures had remained locked up among the Jews in the Hebrew tongue, which was understood by no other nation; but now it was translated into a language that was commonly understood by the nations of the world.

This translation of the Old Testament is still extant, and is of great use. The Jews have many fables about the occasion and manner of this translation; but the truth of the case is supposed to be this, that multitudes of the Jews living in other parts of the world besides Judea, and being born and bred among the Greeks, the Greek became their common language. These not understanding the original Hebrew, they procured the scriptures to be translated for their use into the Greek language; and so henceforward the Jews, in all countries, except Judea, were wont in their synagogues to make use of this translation instead of the Hebrew.

This translation of the scriptures into a language so commonly understood through the world, greatly prepared the way for setting up Christ's kingdom in the world. For the apostles, commissioned to preach through the world, made great use of the scriptures of the Old Testament, and especially of the prophecies concerning Christ that were contained in them. By means of this translation, and by the Jews being scattered every where, they had the scriptures at hand in a language understood by the Gentiles. Hence they principally made use of this translation in their preaching and writings wherever they went. In all the numerous quotations out of the Old Testament in their writings, they are made almost every where in the very words of the Septuagint. The sense is the same as in the original Hebrew; though the words are different. But yet this makes it evident, that the apostles in their preaching and writings, commonly made use of this translation. And this translation was principally used in Christian churches through most nations of the world, for several hundred years after Christ.

XVI. The next thing is the wonderful preservation of the church when it was eminently threatened and persecuted under the Grecian empire. The first time they were threatened was by Alexander himself. When besieging the city of Tyre, he sent to the Jews for assistance and supplies for his army.

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Out of a conscientious regard to their oath to the king of Persia, they refused; but he being a man of a very furious spirit, agreeable to the scripture representation of the rough he-goat, marched against them with a design to cut them off. When he met the priests going out to him in their priestly garments, God wonderfully turned his heart to spare them, and favour them, as he did the heart of Esau when he met Jacob.

After this, one of the kings of Egypt, a successor of one of Alexander's four captains, entertained a design of destroying the nation of the Jews;* but was remarkably and wonderfully prevented by a stronger interposition of Heaven for their preservation.

But the most wonderful preservation of them all in this period was under the cruel persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria, and successor of another of Alexander's four captains. The Jews were at that time subject to the power of Antiochus; and he being enraged against them, long strove to his utmost utterly to destroy them, and root them out; at least all of them that would not forsake their religion, and worship his idols. He did indeed in a great measure waste the country, and depopulate the city of Jerusalem; and profaned the temple, by setting up his idols in some parts of it; and persecuted the people with insatiable cruelty; so that we have no account of any persecution like this before. Many of the particular circumstances of this persecution would be very affecting were there time to insist on them. This cruel persecution began about an hundred and seventy years

* On the death of Alexander the Great, Ptolemy Lagus assumed the regal title in Egypt. He was succeeded by Ptolemy Philadelphus, Evergetes, and Philopater. This last, no doubt, is the person to whom our Author here alludes. He was a cruel tyrant, revengeful, and debauched. Having been at Jerusalem, during his expedition to Syria, and having been denied an entrance into the Temple, he was greatly enraged against the whole body of the Jews. There were great numbers of them at Alexandria; these he degraded into slaves. The only condition by which a mark of disgrace with hot iron, and consequent slavery could be avoided, was to offer sacrifice to his Gods. Out of many thousands, only three hundred yielded by base compliance. These being excommunicated by their brethren, roused Philopater into greater fury. He meditated nothing less than the utter ruin of the whole nation, beginning with those of Alexandria. He ordered them to be brought into the Hippodrome, an immense place without the city where the people usually assembled to see public races and diversions, and gave a peremptory injunction that five hundred elephants should be let loose upon them in that place. The first appointed day, the king, who was to have been present, overslept himself after a nocturnal debauch. The second passed by a similar disappointment. On the third day the king came to the Hippodrome, and the elephants let loose upon the defenceless Jews.—But, by a wonderful providence, these animals turned upon the spectators and soldiers, and great numbers were killed by them. This, attended with some other circumstances of affright, induced the tyrant to desist from his cruel purpose.—W.

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before Christ. It is spoken of in the prophecy of Daniel, Dan. viii. 9, 25; xi. 31—38; and in the New Testament, Heb. xi. 36—38.

Antiochus intended not only to extirpate the Jewish religion, but, as far as in him lay, the very nation; and particularly laboured to the utmost to destroy all copies of the law. And considering how weak they were, in comparison with a king of such vast dominion, the providence of God appears very wonderful in defeating his design. Many times the Jews seemed to be on the very brink of ruin, just ready to be wholly swallowed up; and their enemies often thought themselves sure of obtaining their purpose. They once came against the people with a mighty army, with a design of killing all, except the women and children, and of selling these for slaves; and so confident were they of obtaining their purpose, and others of purchasing, that above a thousand merchants came with the army, with money in their hands, to buy the slaves that should be sold. But God wonderfully stirred up and assisted one Judas, and others his successors, called the Maccabees, who, with a small handful in comparison, vanquished their enemies time after time, and delivered their nation. This also was foretold by Daniel, xi. 32. Speaking of Antiochus's persecution, he says, *And such as do wickedly against the covenant, shall be corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God, shall be strong and do exploits.*

God afterwards brought this Antiochus to a fearful, miserable end, by a loathsome disease, under dreadful torments of body and horrors of mind; which was foretold, (Dan. xi. 45,) in these words, *Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.* After his death, there were attempts still to destroy the church; but God baffled them all.

XVII. The next thing is the destruction of the Grecian, and setting up of the Roman empire. This was the fourth revolution in this period. And though it was brought to pass more gradually than the setting up of the Grecian empire, yet it far exceeded that, and was much the greatest and largest temporal monarchy that ever was in the world; so that the Roman empire was commonly called *all the world;* as in Luke ii. 1. *And there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed: i. e.* all the Roman empire.

This empire is spoken of as much the strongest and greatest of any of the four: Dan. ii. 40. *And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces, and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces, and bruise.* Dan. vii. 7, 19, 23. The time when the Romans first conquered and subdued the land of Judea, was between sixty and seventy years before Christ. Soon after this, the Roman empire was established in

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its greatest extent; and the world continued subject to it henceforward till Christ came, and many hundred years after.

The nations being thus united under one monarchy when Christ came, and when the apostles went forth to preach the gospel, greatly prepared the way for the spreading of the gospel, and the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world.—For the world being thus subject to one government, it opened a general communication, and so opportunity was given for the more swift propagation of the gospel. Thus we find it in the British dominions, the communication is quick from one part to another. There are innumerable difficulties in travelling through different nations, that are under different independent governments, which there are not in travelling through different parts of the same realm, or different dominions of the same prince. So the world, being under one government, that of the Romans, facilitated the apostles' travelling.

XVIII. About the same time learning and philosophy were risen to their greatest height in the Heathen world.—Almost all the famous philosophers among the Heathen, were after the captivity into Babylon. Almost all the wise men of Greece and Rome flourished in this time. What these philosophers in general chiefly professed as their business, was to inquire, wherein man's chief happiness lay, and how to obtain it. They seemed earnestly to busy themselves in this inquiry, and wrote multitudes of books about it, many of which are still extant; but they were exceedingly divided, there having been reckoned several hundreds of different opinions which they had concerning it. Thus they wearied themselves in vain, wandering in the dark, not having the glorious gospel to guide them. God was pleased to suffer men to do the utmost that they could with human wisdom, and to try the utmost extent of their own understandings in order to find out the way to happiness, before the true light came to enlighten the world. God suffered these great philosophers to try what they could do for six hundred years together; and then it proved by the events of so long a time, that all they could do was in vain; the world not becoming wiser, better, or happier under their instructions, but growing more and more foolish, wicked, and miserable. He suffered this, that it might be seen how far reason and philosophy could go in their highest ascent, that the necessity of a divine teacher might more convincingly appear. God was pleased to make foolish the wisdom of this world—to shew men the folly of their best wisdom—by the doctrines of his glorious gospel, which were above the reach of all their philosophy. See 1 Cor. i. 19—21.

After God had shewed the vanity of human learning, when set up in the room of the gospel, God was pleased to make it subservient to the purposes of Christ's kingdom, as an

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handmaid to divine revelation. Thereby the vanity of human wisdom was shown, and the necessity of the gospel appeared; and hereby an handmaid was prepared to the gospel. An instance of this we have in the apostle Paul, who was famed for his much learning, (Acts xxvi. 24,) being skilled in the learning not only of the Jews, but also of the philosophers. This he improved to subserve the gospel; as he did in disputing with the philosophers at Athens, Acts xvii. 22, &c. By his learning he knew how to accommodate himself in his discourses to learned men, having read their writings; and he cites their own poets. Dionysius, a philosopher, was converted by him, and was made a great instrument of promoting the gospel. And there were many others in that and the following ages, who were eminently useful by their human learning in promoting the interests of Christ's kingdom.

XIX. Just before Christ was born, the Roman empire was raised to its greatest height, and also settled in peace. About four and twenty years before Christ, Augustus Cæsar, the first Roman emperor, began to rule as emperor of the world. Till then the Roman empire had of a long time been a commonwealth under the government of the senate: but then it became an absolute monarchy. This personage, as he was the first, so he was the greatest of all the Roman emperors; he reigned in the greatest glory. Thus the power of the Heathen world, which was Satan's visible kingdom, was raised to its greatest height, after it had been strengthening itself more and more from the days of Solomon, which was about a *thousand years*. Now the Heathen world was in its greatest glory for strength, wealth, and learning.

God did two things to prepare the way for Christ's coming, wherein he took a contrary method from that which human wisdom would have taken. He brought his own visible people very low, and made them weak; but the Heathen, his enemies, he exalted to the greatest height, for the more glorious triumph of the cross of Christ. With a small number in their greatest weakness, he conquered his enemies in their greatest glory. Thus Christ triumphed over principalities and powers in his cross.

Augustus Cæsar had been for many years establishing his empire, and subduing his enemies, till the very year that Christ was born; when, all his enemies being subdued, his dominion over the world seemed to be gloriously settled. All was established in peace; in token whereof the Romans shut the temple of Janus, which was an established symbol among them of there being universal peace throughout the empire. And this universal peace, which was begun that very year in which Christ was born, lasted twelve years, even till the year that Christ disputed with the doctors in the temple.

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Thus the world, after it had been, as it were, in a continual convulsion for so many hundred years together—like the four winds striving together on the tumultuous raging ocean, whence arose those four great monarchies—was now established in the greatest height of the fourth and last monarchy, and settled in quietness. Now all things are ready for the birth of Christ. This remarkable universal peace, after so many ages of tumult and war, was a fit prelude for ushering the glorious Prince of Peace into the world.

Thus I have gone through the first grand period of the whole space between the fall of man and the end of the world, viz. from the fall to the time of the incarnation of Christ; and have shown the truth of the first proposition, viz. That *from the fall of man to the incarnation of Christ*, God was doing those things which were preparatory to Christ's coming, and were forerunners of it.

PART VII.

Improvement of the First Period.

Before I proceed to the next period, I would make some few remarks, by way of improvement upon what has been said under this.

I. From what has been said, we may strongly argue, that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world; and so that the Christian religion is the true religion, seeing that Christ is the very person so evidently pointed at, in all the great dispensations of divine providence from the very fall of man, and was so undoubtedly in so many instances foretold from age to age, and shadowed forth in a vast variety of types and figures. If we seriously consider the course of things from the beginning, and observe the motions of all the great wheels of providence, we shall discern that they all tend hither. They are all as so many lines, whose course, if it be observed and accurately followed, will be found to centre here. It is so very plain in many things, that it would argue stupidity to deny it. This person, sent from God, came into the world with his commission and authority, to do his work, and to declare his mind. The Governor of the world, in all his great works towards Jews and Gentiles, down to the time of Christ's birth, has declared

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it. It is a plain and evident truth, that he who was born at Bethlehem, who dwelt at Nazareth and Capernaum, and who was crucified without the gates of Jerusalem, must be the great Messiah. Blessed are all they that believe in and confess him, and miserable are all that deny him. This shows the unreasonableness of the Deists, who deny revealed religion, and of the Jews, who deny that this Jesus is the Messiah foretold and promised to their fathers.

Here should any object, That it may be, some cunning men contrived this history, and these prophecies, on purpose to prove that he is the Messiah. To such it may be replied, How could such a thing be contrived by cunning men to point to Jesus Christ, long before he ever was born? How could they know that any such person would be born? And how could their subtilty help them to foresee and point at an event that was to come to pass many ages afterwards? For no fact can be more evident, than that the Jews had those writings long before Christ was born; as they have them still in great veneration, in all their dispersions through the world. They would never have received such a contrivance from Christians, to prove Jesus to be the Messiah, whom they always denied; and much less would they have been made to believe that they always had those books in their hands, if they had been an imposition.

II. What has been said, affords a strong argument for the divine authority of the books of the Old Testament, from that admirable harmony there is in them, whereby they all point to the same thing. For we may see by what has been said, how all the parts of the Old Testament, though written by so many different penmen, and in ages so distant, harmonize one with another. All agree in one, and centre in the same event; which it was impossible for any one of them to know, but by divine revelation.

Now, if the Old Testament was not inspired by God, what account can be given of such an agreement? for if these books were written without any divine direction, then none of these penmen knew that there would come such a person as Jesus Christ into the world; his coming was only a mere figment of their own brain: and if so, how happened it, that this figment of theirs came to pass? How came a vain imagination of theirs, which they foretold without any manner of ground for their prediction, to be exactly fulfilled? and especially how did they all come to agree in it, all pointing exactly to the same thing, though many of them lived so many hundred years distant one from another?—This admirable consent and agreement in a future event, is therefore a clear and certain evidence of the divine authority of those writings.

III. Hence we may learn how weak and ignorant the ob-

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jection is, against the Old Testament being the word of God, because it consists so much of warlike histories and civil transactions. Here, say some, we have histories of their kings and rulers, their wars with neighbouring nations, and the changes that happened in their state and government: but other nations used to keep histories of their public affairs, as well as they; why then should we think that these histories which the Jews kept are the word of God, more than those of other people? What has been said, shows the folly and vanity of such an objection. For hereby it appears, that the case of these histories is very different from that of all others. This history alone gives us an account of the first original of all things; and this alone deduces things down to us in a wonderful series from that original, giving an idea of the grand scheme of divine providence, as tending to its great end. And, together with the doctrines and prophecies contained in it, the same book gives a view of the whole series of the great events of divine providence, from the origin to the consummation of all things; exhibiting an excellent and glorious account of the wise and holy designs of the supreme governor in all. No common history has had such penmen. This history was all written by men who came with evident signs and testimonies of their being prophets of the most high God, immediately inspired.—And though *histories*, yet containing those great events of providence by which it appears how God has been carrying on the glorious work of redemption from age to age, they are no less full of divine instruction, and those things that show forth Christ, and his glorious gospel, than the other parts of the holy scriptures.

To object against a book's being divine, merely because it is historical, is a poor fancy; as if that could not be the word of God which gives an account of what is past; or as though it were not reasonable to suppose, that God, in a revelation he should give mankind, would give us any relation of the dispensations of his own providence. If so, it must be because his works are not worthy to be related: or because the scheme of his government, and the series of his dispensations towards his church, and the world he has made, is not worthy that any record should be kept of it.

The objection, that it is a common thing for nations and kingdoms to write histories and keep records of their wars, and the revolutions that come to pass in their territories, is so far from being a weighty objection against the historical part of scripture, as though it were not the word of God, that it is a strong argument in favour of it. For if the light of nature teaches all civilized nations to keep records of the events of *their* government and the series of their administrations, and to publish histories for the information of others, how much

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more may we expect that God would give the world a record of the dispensations of *his* government, which doubtless is infinitely more worthy of an history for our information? If wise kings have taken care that there should be good histories written of the nations over which they have reigned, shall we think it incredible, that Jesus Christ should take care that his church, which is his nation, his peculiar people, should have in their hands a certain infallible history of their nation, and of his government of them?

If it had not been for the history of the Old Testament, how woefully should we have been left in the dark about many things which the church of God needs to know! How ignorant should we have been of God's dealings towards mankind, and towards his church, from the beginning! We should have been wholly in the dark about the creation of the world, the fall of man, the first rise and continued progress of the dispensations of grace towards fallen mankind! We should have known nothing how God at first set up a church in the world, and how it was preserved; after what manner he governed it from the beginning; how the light of the gospel first began to dawn in the world; how it increased, and how things were preparing for the coming of Christ.

If we are Christians, we belong to that building of God that has been the subject of our discourse: but if it had not been for the history of the Old Testament, we should never have known what was the first occasion of God's going about this building, how the foundation of it was laid, and how it has gone on from the beginning. The times of the history of the Old Testament are mostly such as no other history includes; and therefore, if God had not taken care to give and preserve an account of these things for us, we should have been wholly without them.

Those that object against the authority of the Old Testament history, may as well object against Moses' account of the creation; for, in the former, we have a history of a work no less important, viz. the work of redemption. Yea, this is a far greater and more glorious work. If it be inquired which of the two works, that of creation, or that of providence, is greatest? it must be answered, the work of providence; but the work of redemption is the greatest of the works of providence.—And let those who make this objection consider what part of the Old Testament history can be spared, without making a great breach in that thread or series of events by which this glorious work has been carried on.—This leads me to observe,

IV. That, from what has been said, we may see much of the wisdom of God in the composition of the scriptures of the Old Testament, *i. e.* in the parts of which it consists. Let us

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briefly take a view of the several parts of it, and of the need there was of them.

It was necessary, for instance, that we should have some account of the creation of the world, of our first parents, and their primitive state; of the fall, of the old world, and its degeneracy; of the universal deluge, and the origin of nations after this destruction of mankind.

It seems necessary, moreover, that there should be some account of the succession of the church of God from the beginning. God suffered all the world to degenerate, and took one nation only to be his people, to preserve the true worship and religion till the Saviour of the world should come. In them the world was gradually prepared for that great light, and those wonderful things of which he was to be the author. Thus they were a typical nation, that in them God might shadow forth and teach, as under a vail, all the future glories of the gospel. It was therefore necessary that we should have some account of this; how it was first effected by the call of Abraham, and by their being bond-slaves in Egypt, and how they were brought to Canaan. It was necessary that we should have some account of the revelation which God made of himself to that people, in giving their law, in the appointment of their typical worship, wherein the gospel is vailed, and of the formation of their civil and ecclesiastical state.

It seems exceeding necessary that we should have some account of their being actually brought to Canaan, the country promised them, and where they always dwelt; that we should have a history of the successions of the church of Israel, and of those providences towards them, which were most considerable and fullest of gospel mystery; that we should have some account of the promised external glory of that nation under David and Solomon, and a very particular account of David, whose history is so full of the gospel, and in whom began the race of their kings; and that we should have some account of the building of the temple, which was also full of gospel mystery.

And it is a matter of great consequence, that we should have some account of Israel's dividing from Judah, and of the ten tribes' captivity and utter rejection, and therefore a brief history of them till that time; that we should have an account of the succession of the kings of Juda, and of the church, till their captivity into Babylon; of their return from captivity, and resettlement in their own land, with the origin of the last state of the church before Christ came.

A little consideration will convince any one, that all these things were necessary, and that none of them could be spared; and in the general, that it was necessary we should have a history of God's church till such times as are within the reach

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of human histories. It was of vast importance that we should have an inspired history of those times of the Jewish church, wherein there was kept up a more extraordinary intercourse between God and them, while he used to dwell among them as it were visibly, revealing himself by the Shechinah, by Urim and Thummim, and by prophecy, and so more immediately to order their affairs. And it was necessary that we should have some account of the great dispensations of God in prophecy, after the finishing of inspired history; for which it was needful that there should be a number of prophets raised who should foretel the coming of the Son of God, and the nature and glory of his kingdom, as so many harbingers to make way for him, and that their prophecies should remain in the church.

It was also a matter of great consequence that the church should have a book of divine songs given by inspiration from God, wherein there should be a lively representation of the true spirit of devotion, of faith, hope, and divine love, of joy, resignation, humility, obedience, repentance, &c. as in the Psalms; also that we should have from God such books of moral instructions as we have in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, relating to the affairs and state of mankind, and the concerns of human life, containing rules of true wisdom and prudence for our conduct in all circumstances; and that we should have particularly a song representing the great love between Christ and his spouse the church, adapted to the disposition and holy affections of a true Christian soul towards Christ, and representing his grace and marvellous love to, and delight in his people, as in Solomon's Song. It is important that we should have a book to teach us how to conduct ourselves under affliction, seeing the church of God here is in a militant state, and God's people through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of heaven. The church is for a long time under trouble, meets with fiery trials, and extreme sufferings, before her time of peace and rest in the latter ages of the world. Therefore God has given us a book most proper in these circumstances, the book of Job; and though written on occasion of the afflictions of a particular saint, it was probably at first given to the church in Egypt under her afflictions there; and is made use of by the Apostle to comfort Christians under persecutions, James v. 11. *Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.* God was also pleased, in this book of Job, to give some view of the ancient divinity before the giving of the law.

Thus, from this brief review, I think it appears, that every part of the scriptures of the Old Testament is very use-

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ful and necessary, and no part of it can be spared without loss to the church. And therefore the wisdom of God is conspicuous in ordering, that the scriptures of the Old Testament should consist of those very books of which they do consist.

Before I dismiss this particular, I would add, that it is very observable, that the history of the Old Testament is large and particular where the great affair of redemption required it; even where there was most done towards this work, most to typify Christ, and to prepare the way for him. Thus it is very particular in the history of Abraham and the other patriarchs; but very short in the account we have of the time which the children of Israel spent in Egypt. It is large in the account of the redemption out of Egypt, and the first settling of the affairs of the Jewish church and nation in the time of Moses and Joshua; but much shorter in the times of the Judges. So again, it is large and particular in the times of David and Solomon, and then very short in the history of the ensuing reigns. Thus the accounts are large or short, just as there is more or less of the affair of redemption to be seen in them.

V. From what has been said, we may see, that Christ and his redemption are the great subject of the whole Bible. Concerning the New Testament, the matter is plain; and by what has been said, it appears to be so also with respect to the Old Testament. Christ and his redemption is the great subject of the prophecies of the Old Testament, as has been shown. It has also been shown, that he is the great subject of the songs of the Old Testament; and the moral rules and precepts are all given in subordination to him. Christ and his redemption are also the great subject of the history of the Old Testament from the beginning all along; and even the history of the creation is brought in as an introduction to the history of redemption that immediately follows it. The whole book, both Old Testament and New, is filled up with the Gospel; only with this difference, that the Old Testament contains the gospel under a vail, but the New contains it unvailed, so that we may see the glory of the Lord with open face.

VI. By what has been said, we may see the usefulness and excellency of the Old Testament. Some are ready to look on the Old Testament as being out of date, and as if we, in these days of the gospel, have but little to do with it. But this is a very great mistake, arising from a want of observing the nature and design of the Old Testament, which, if it were observed, would appear full of the gospel of Christ, and would in an excellent manner illustrate and confirm the glorious doctrines and promises of the New Testament. Those parts of the Old Testament which are commonly looked upon

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as containing the least divine instruction, are mines and treasures of gospel knowledge; and the reason why they are thought to contain so little is, because persons do but superficially read them. The treasures which are hid underneath are not observed. They only look on the top of the ground, and suddenly pass a judgment that there is nothing there. But they never dig into the mine: if they did, they would find it richly stored with what is more valuable than silver and gold, and would be abundantly requited for their pains.

What has been said, may show us what a precious treasure God has committed into our hands, in that he has given us the Bible. How little do most persons consider what a privilege they enjoy, in the possession of that holy book, the Bible, which they have in their hands, and may converse with as they please. What an excellent book is this, and how far exceeding all human writings! It reveals God to us, and gives us a view of the grand design and glorious scheme of providence from the beginning of the world, either in history or prophecy. It reveals the great Redeemer, his glorious redemption, and the various steps by which God accomplishes it from the first foundation to the top-stone! Shall we prize a history which gives us a clear account of some great earthly prince, or mighty warrior, as of an Alexander, a Cæsar, or a Marlborough? and shall we not prize the history that God gives us of the glorious kingdom of his Son Jesus Christ, the Prince and Saviour, and of the great transactions of that King of kings, and Lord of armies, the Lord mighty in battle; and what he has wrought for the redemption of his chosen people?

VII. What has been said, may make us sensible how much most persons are to blame for their inattentive, unobservant way of reading the scriptures. How much profitable matter do the scriptures contain, if it were but observed! The Bible is the most comprehensive book in the world. But what will all this signify to us, if we read it without observing what is the drift of the Holy Ghost in it? The Psalmist, (Psal. cxix. 18,) begs of God, *That he would enlighten his eyes that he might behold wondrous things out of his law.* The scriptures are full of wondrous things. Those histories which are too commonly read as if they were only private concerns of particular persons, such as of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph; of Ruth, Joshua, the Judges, David, and the Israelitish princes, are accounts of vastly greater things, things of greater importance and more extensive concernment, than they who read them are commonly aware of.

The histories of scripture are but too commonly read, as if they were written only to entertain men's fancies, when the

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infinitely great things contained in them are passed over without notice. Whatever treasures the scriptures contain, we shall be never the better for them if we do not observe them. He that has a Bible, and does not observe what it contains, is like a man who has a box full of silver and gold, and does not know it, nor observe that it is any thing more than a vessel filled with common stones. He will be never the better for his treasure; and so might as well be without it. He who has plenty of the choicest food stored up in his house, and does not know it, will never taste what he has, and will be as likely to starve as if his house were empty.

VIII. What has been said, may show us how great a person Jesus Christ is, and how great his errand into the world, seeing there was so much done to prepare the way for his coming. God had been preparing the way for him through all ages of the world from the very beginning. If we had notice of a certain stranger being about to come into a country, and should observe that a great preparation was made for him, great things were done, many alterations made in the state of the whole country, many hands employed, persons of great note engaged in making the preparation; and all the affairs and concerns of the country ordered so as to be subservient to the design of entertaining that person; it would be natural for us to think, surely, this is some extraordinary person, and it is some very great business that he is coming upon. How great a person then must he be, for whose coming the great God of heaven and earth, and governor of all things, spent four thousand years in preparing the way! Soon after the world was created, and from age to age, he has been doing great things, bringing mighty events to pass, accomplishing wonders without number, often overturning the world in order to it. He has been causing every thing in the state of mankind, and all revolutions and changes in the habitable world, from generation to generation, to be subservient to this great design.—Surely this must be some great and extraordinary person, and a great work indeed it must needs be, about which he is coming.

We read, (Matt. xxi. 8—10,) when Christ was coming into Jerusalem, and multitudes ran before him, having cut down branches of palm-trees, and strewed them in the way; and others spread their garments in the way, crying, *Hosanna to the son of David*, that the whole city was moved, saying, Who is this? They wondered who that extraordinary person should be, that there should be such preparation made on occasion of his coming into the city. But if we consider, what great things were done in all ages to prepare the way for Christ's coming, and how the world was often overturned.

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to make way for it, much more may we cry out, Who is this? What great person is this? and say, (as in Psalm xxiv. 8, 10,) *Who is this king of glory*, that God should show such respect, and put such vast honour upon him? Surely this person is honourable in God's eyes, and greatly beloved of him; and surely it is a grand errand upon which he is sent.

PERIOD II.

FROM CHRIST'S INCARNATION TO HIS RESURRECTION.

HAVING shown how the work of redemption was carried on through the first period, from the fall of man to the incarnation of Christ, I come now to the second period, viz. the time of Christ's humiliation, or the space from his incarnation to his resurrection. And this is the most remarkable article of time that ever was or ever will be. Though it was but between thirty and forty years, yet more was done in it than had been done from the beginning of the world to that time. We have observed, that all which had been done from the fall to the incarnation of Christ, was only preparatory for what was now done. And it may also be observed, that all which was done before the beginning of time, in the eternal counsels between the persons of the blessed Trinity, chiefly respected this period. We therefore now proceed to consider the *second proposition*, viz.

That during the time of Christ's humiliation, from his incarnation to his resurrection, the purchase of redemption was made.

Though many things had been done in the affair of redemption, though millions of sacrifices had been offered; yet nothing was done to *purchase* redemption before Christ's incarnation. No part of the purchase was made, no part of the price was offered till now. But as soon as Christ was incarnate, the purchase began.—And the whole time of Christ's humiliation, till the morning that he rose from the dead, was taken up in this purchase. Then the purchase was entirely and completely finished. As nothing was done before Christ's incarnation, so nothing was done after his resurrection, to purchase redemption for men. Nor will there ever be any thing more

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done to all eternity. That very moment when the human nature of Christ ceased to remain under the power of death, the utmost farthing was paid of the price of salvation for every one of the elect.

But for the more orderly and regular consideration of the great things done by our Redeemer to purchase redemption for us, I would speak of his becoming incarnate to capacitate himself for this purchase;—and of the purchase itself.

PART I.

Of Christ's Incarnation.

Christ became incarnate, or, which is the same thing, became man, to put himself in a capacity for working out our redemption. For though Christ, as God, was infinitely sufficient for the work, yet to his being in an immediate capacity for it, it was needful that he should not only be God, but man. If Christ had remained only in the divine nature, he would not have been in a capacity to have purchased our salvation; not from any imperfection of the divine nature, but by reason of its absolute and infinite perfection: for Christ, merely as God, was not capable either of that obedience or suffering that was needful. The divine nature is not capable of *suffering;* for it is infinitely above all suffering. Neither is it capable of *obedience* to that law which was given to man. It is as impossible that one who is only God, should obey the law that was given to man, as it is that he should suffer man's punishment.

And it was necessary not only that Christ should take upon him a *created* nature, but that he should take upon him *our* nature. It would not have sufficed for Christ to have become an *angel*, and to have obeyed and suffered in the angelic nature. But it was necessary that he should become a *man*, upon three accounts.

1. *It was needful in order to answer the law, that the very nature to which the law was given, should obey it.* Man's law could not be answered, but by being obeyed by man. God insisted upon it, that the law which he had given to man should be honoured, and fulfilled by the nature of man, otherwise the law could not be answered for men. The words, *Thou shalt not eat thereof, &c.* were spoken to the race of man-

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kind, to the human nature; and therefore the human nature must fulfil them.

2. *It was needful to answer the law that the nature that sinned should die.* These words, "Thou shalt surely die," respect the human nature. The same nature to which the command was given, was that to which the threatening was directed.

3. *God saw meet, that the same world which was the stage of man's fall and ruin, should also be the stage of his redemption.* We read often of his coming into the world to save sinners, and of God's sending him into the world for this purpose.—It was needful that he should come into this sinful, miserable, undone world, in order to restore and save it. For man's recovery, it was needful that he should come down to man, to man's proper habitation, and that he should tabernacle with us: John i. 14. *The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.*

CONCERNING the incarnation of Christ, I would observe these following things.

I. The incarnation itself; in which especially two things are to be considered, viz.

1. His conception; which was in the womb of one of the race of mankind, whereby he became truly the Son of man, as he was often called. He was one of the posterity of Adam, a child of Abraham, and a son of David, according to God's promise. But his conception was—not in the way of ordinary generation, but—by the power of the Holy Ghost. Christ was formed in the womb of the Virgin, of the substance of her body, by the power of the Spirit of God. So that he was the immediate son of the woman, but not the immediate son of any male whatsoever; and so was the seed of the woman, and the son of a virgin, one that had never known man.

2. His birth.——Though the conception of Christ was supernatural, yet after he was conceived, his human nature was gradually perfected in the womb of the virgin, in a way of natural progress; and so his birth was in the way of nature. But his conception being supernatural, by the power of the Holy Ghost, he was both conceived and born without sin.

II. The second thing I would observe concerning the incarnation of Christ, is the fulness of the time in which it was accomplished. It was after things had been preparing for it from the very first fall of mankind, and when all things were ready. It came to pass at a time, which in infinite wisdom was the most fit and proper: Gal. iv. 4. *But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.*

It was now the most proper time on every account. Any time before the flood would not have been so fit a time. For

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then the mischief and ruin that the fall brought on mankind, was not so fully seen. The curse did not so fully come on the earth before the flood, as it did afterwards: for though the ground was cursed in a great measure before, yet it pleased God that the curse should once, before the restoration by Christ, be executed in an universal destruction, even of the very form of the earth, that the dire effects of the fall might be seen before the recovery. Though mankind were mortal before the flood, yet their lives were almost a thousand years in length, a kind of immortality in comparison with what the life of man is now. It pleased God, that the curse, *Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return*, should have its full accomplishment, and be executed in its greatest degree on mankind, before the Redeemer came to purchase a never-ending life.

It would not have been so fit a time for Christ to come, before Moses; for till then mankind were not so universally apostatized from the true God; they were not fallen universally into Heathenish darkness; and so the need of Christ, the light of the world, was not so evident. The woeful consequence of the fall with respect to man's mortality, was not so fully manifest till then; for man's life was not so shortened as to be reduced to the present standard, till about Moses' time.

It was most fit that the time of the Messiah's coming should not be till all nations, but the children of Israel, had lain long in Heathenish darkness; that the remedilessness of their disease might by long experience be seen, and so the absolute necessity of the heavenly physician.

Another reason why Christ did not come soon after the flood probably was, that the earth might be full of people, that he might have the more extensive kingdom, that the effects of his light, power, and grace, might be glorified, and that his victory over Satan might be attended with the more glory in the multitude of his conquests. It was also needful that the coming of Christ should be many ages after Moses, that the church might be prepared by the Messiah's being long prefigured, foretold, and expected. It was not proper that Christ should come before the Babylonish captivity, because Satan's kingdom was not then come to its height. The Heathen world before that consisted of lesser kingdoms. But God saw meet that the Messiah should come in the time of one of the four great monarchies. Nor was it proper that he should come in the time of the Babylonish, the Persian, or the Grecian monarchy. It was the will of God that his Son should make his appearance in the world in the time of the Roman, the greatest and strongest monarchy, which was Satan's visible kingdom in the world; that, by overcoming this, he might

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visibly overcome Satan's kingdom in its greatest strength and glory, and so obtain the more complete triumph over Satan himself.

It was not proper that Christ should come before the Babylonish captivity. For, before that, we have not histories of the state of the Heathen world, to give us an idea of the need of a Saviour. Besides, learning did not much flourish, and so there had not been opportunity to show the insufficiency of human learning and wisdom to reform and save mankind. Again, the Jews were not dispersed over the world, as they were afterwards; and so things were not prepared in this respect for the coming of Christ. The necessity of abolishing the Jewish dispensation was not then so apparent as it was afterwards, by reason of the dispersion of the Jews; neither was the way prepared for the propagation of the gospel, as it was afterwards, by the same dispersion. Many other things might be mentioned, by which it would appear, that no other season before that very time in which Christ came, would have been proper for his appearing.

III. The next thing that I would observe concerning the incarnation of Christ, is the greatness of this event. Christ's incarnation was a greater and more wonderful thing than ever had yet come to pass. The creation of the world was a very great thing, but not so great as the incarnation of Christ. It was a great thing for God to make the creature, but not so great as for the Creator himself to become a creature. We have spoken of many great things that were accomplished between the fall of man and the incarnation of Christ: but God becoming man was greater than all. Then the greatest person was born that ever was or ever will be.

IV. Next observe, concerning the incarnation of Christ, the remarkable circumstances of it. He was born of a poor virgin; a pious holy person, but poor, as appeared by her offering at her purification: Luke ii. 24. *And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons.* Which refers to Lev. v. 7. *And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtle-doves or two young pigeons.* And this poor virgin was espoused to an husband who was but a poor man. Though they were both of the royal family of David, which was the most honourable, and Joseph was the rightful heir to the crown; yet the family was reduced to a very low state; which is represented by the tabernacle of David being fallen, Amos ix. 11. *In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof, and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old.*

He was born in the town of Bethlehem, as was foretold:

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(Mich. v. 2.) and there was a very remarkable providence of God to bring about the fulfilment of this prophecy, the taxing of all the world by Augustus Cæsar, (Luke ii.) He was born in a very low condition, even in a stable, and laid in a manger.

V. Observe the concomitants of this great event.—And,

1. The return of the *Spirit;* which indeed began a little before, but yet was given on occasion of his birth. I have before observed how the spirit of prophecy ceased, not long after Malachi. From about the same time visions and immediate revelations ceased also. But on this occasion, they are granted anew, and the Spirit in these operations returns again. The first revealed instance of its restoration is the vision of Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, (Luke i.) The next is the vision which the Virgin Mary had, *(ibid.)* The third is the vision which Joseph had, (Matt. i.) In the next place, the Spirit was given to Elisabeth, (Luke i. 41.) Next, it was given to Mary, as appears by her song, (Luke i. 46, &c.) Then to Zacharias again, (*ibid.* verse 64.) Then it was sent to the shepherds, (Luke ii. 9.) Then it was given to Simeon, (Luke ii. 25.) Then to Anna, (ver. 36.) Then to the wise men in the east. Then to Joseph again, directing him to flee into Egypt; and after that directing his return.

2. The next concomitant of Christ's incarnation is, the great notice that was taken of it in heaven, and on earth. How it was noticed by the glorious inhabitants of the heavenly world, appears by their joyful songs on this occasion, heard by the shepherds in the night. This was the greatest event of providence that ever the angels had beheld. We read of their singing praises when they saw the formation of this lower world: Job xxxviii. 7. *When the morning-stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.* And so they do, on this much greater occasion, the birth of the Son of God, who is the creator of the world.

The glorious angels had all along expected this event. They had taken great notice of the prophecies and promises of these things: for we are told, that they desire to look into the affairs of redemption, 1 Pet. i. 12. They had been the ministers of Christ in this affair of redemption, in all the several steps of it from the very fall of man; as in God's dealings with Abraham, with Jacob, and with the Israelites. And doubtless they had long joyfully expected the coming of Christ; but now they see it accomplished, and therefore greatly rejoice, and sing praises on this occasion.

Notice was taken of it by Elisabeth and the Virgin Mary before the birth of Christ; not to say by John the Baptist before he was born, when he leaped in his mother's womb as

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it were for joy, at the voice of the salutation of Mary. Elisabeth and Mary most joyfully praise God together, with Christ and his forerunner in their wombs, and the Holy Spirit in their souls. And afterwards what joyful notice is taken of this event by the shepherds, and by those holy persons Zacharias, and Simeon, and Anna! How do they praise God on the occasion! Thus the inhabitants of heaven, and the church on earth, unite in their joy and praise on this occasion.

Great part of the universe takes joyful notice of the incarnation of Christ. Heaven takes notice of it, and the inhabitants sing for joy. This lower world of mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, take notice of it. It pleased God to put honour on his Son, by wonderfully stirring up some of the wisest of the Gentiles to come a long journey to see and worship him at his birth. They were led by a miraculous star, signifying the birth of that glorious person who is the bright and morning-star, going before, and leading them to the very place where the young child was. Some think they were instructed by the prophecy of Balaam, who dwelt in the eastern parts, and who foretold Christ's coming as a star that should rise out of Jacob. Or they might be instructed by that general expectation there was of the Messiah's coming about that time, from the prophecies the Jews had of him in their dispersions in all parts of the world.

3. The next concomitant of the birth of Christ was his circumcision. But this may more properly be spoken of under another head, and so I will not insist upon it now.

4. The next concomitant was his first coming into the second temple, when an infant, on occasion of the purification of the blessed Virgin. We read, Hagg. ii. 7. *The desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house (or temple) with glory.* And in Mal. iii. 1. *The Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant.* And now was the first instance of the fulfilment of these prophecies.

5. The last concomitant I shall mention is the sceptre's departing from Judah, in the death of Herod the Great. The sceptre had never totally departed from Judah till now. Judah's sceptre was greatly diminished in the revolt of the ten tribes in Jeroboam's time; and the sceptre departed from Israel or Ephraim at the time of the captivity of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser. But it remained in the tribe of Judah, under the kings of the house of David. And when the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar, the sceptre of Judah ceased for a little while, till the return from the captivity under Cyrus: and then, though they were not an independent government, as they had been before, but owed fealty to the kings of Persia; yet their governor was of

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themselves, who had the power of life and death, and they were governed by their own laws; and so Judah had a lawgiver from between his feet during the Persian and Grecian monarchies. Towards the latter part of the Grecian monarchy, the people were governed by kings of their own, of the race of the Maccabees, for near a hundred years; and after that they were subdued by the Romans. But yet the Romans suffered them to be governed by their own laws, and to have a king of their own, Herod the Great, who reigned about forty years, and governed with proper kingly authority, only paying homage to the Romans. But presently after Christ was born he died, as we have an account, (Matt. ii. 19.) and Archelaus succeeded him; but was soon put down by the Roman Emperor; and then the sceptre departed from Judah. There were no more temporal kings of Judah after that, neither had that people their governors from the midst of themselves, but were ruled by a Roman governor sent among them; and they ceased to have the power of life and death among themselves. Hence the Jews say to Pilate, *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death*, John xviii. 31. Thus the sceptre departed from Judah when Shiloh came.

PART II.

The Purchase of Redemption.

HAVING thus considered Christ's coming into the world, and his taking on him our nature, to put himself in a capacity for the purchase of redemption, I come now to shew what is intended by the *purchase* of redemption—to make some general *observations* concerning those things by which this purchase was made—and then to consider those things more particularly which Christ did and suffered, by which that purchase was made.

SECT. I.

The Purchase itself, what?

BY Christ purchasing redemption, two things are intended, his *satisfaction*, and his *merit*. All is done by the price that Christ lays down, which does two things: it pays our debt, and so it *satisfies*; it procures our title to happiness, and so it

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merits. The *satisfaction* of Christ is to free us from *misery*, and the *merit* of Christ is to purchase *happiness* for us.

The word *purchase*, in this connection, is taken either more strictly or more largely. It is oftentimes used more strictly, to signify only the merit of Christ; and sometimes more largely, to signify both his satisfaction and merit. Indeed most of the words used in this affair have various significations. Thus sometimes divines use *merit* for the whole price that Christ offered, both satisfactorily, and positively meritorious. And so the word *satisfaction* is sometimes used, not only for his propitiation, but also for his meritorious obedience. For in some sense, not only suffering the penalty, but positively obeying, is needful to satisfy the law. The reason of this various use of these terms seems to be, that satisfaction and merit do not differ so much really as relatively. They both consist in paying a valuable price, a price of infinite value: but only that price as it respects a debt to be paid, is called *satisfaction*; and as it respects a positive good to be obtained, is called *merit*. The difference between paying a debt and making a positive purchase is more relative than essential. He who lays down a price to pay a debt, does in some sense make a purchase: he purchases liberty from the obligation. And he who lays down a price to purchase a good, does as it were make satisfaction: he satisfies the conditional demands of him to whom he pays it. This may suffice concerning what is meant by the purchase of Christ.

SECT. II.

Some general Observations concerning those things by which this Purchase was made.

1. And here observe, That whatever in Christ had the nature of *satisfaction*, was by virtue of the *suffering* or humiliation that was in it; but whatever had the nature of *merit*, was by virtue of the *obedience* or righteousness there was in it. The satisfaction of Christ consists in his answering the demands of the law on man, which were *consequent* on the breach of the law. These were answered by *suffering* the penalty of the law. The merit of Christ consists in what he did to answer the demands, which were *prior* to man's breach of the law, or to fulfil what the law demanded before man sinned, which was *obedience*.

The satisfaction or propitiation of Christ consists either in his *suffering* evil, or his being subject to *abasement*. Christ did not only make satisfaction by proper suffering, but by whatever had the nature of humiliation, and abasement of

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circumstances. Thus he made satisfaction by continuing under the power of death, while he lay buried in the grave; though neither his body nor soul properly endured any suffering after he was dead. Whatever Christ was subject to that was the judicial fruit of sin, had the nature of satisfaction for sin. But not only proper suffering, but all abasement and depression of the state and circumstances of mankind below its primitive honour and dignity, such as his body remaining under death, his body and soul remaining separate, &c. are the judicial fruits of sin. And all that Christ did in his state of humiliation, that had the nature of obedience, moral virtue, or goodness, had the nature of merit, in it, and was part of the price with which he purchased happiness for the elect.

2. Both Christ's satisfaction for sin, and also his meriting happiness by his righteousness, were carried on through the *whole time* of his humiliation. Christ's satisfaction for sin was not by his last sufferings only, though it was principally by them; but all his sufferings, and all his humiliation, from the first moment of his incarnation to his resurrection, were propitiatory or satisfactory. Christ's satisfaction was chiefly by his death, because his sufferings and humiliation in that was greatest. But all his other sufferings, and all his other humiliation, all along had the nature of satisfaction: the mean circumstances in which he was born; his being born of a poor virgin, in a stable, and laid in a manger; his taking the human nature upon him in its low state, and under those infirmities brought upon it by the fall; his being born in the form of sinful flesh, &c. And so all his sufferings in his infancy and childhood, and all that labour, contempt, reproach, temptation, and difficulty of any kind which he suffered through the whole course of his life, was of a propitiatory and satisfactory nature.—And so his purchase of happiness by his righteousness was also carried on through the whole time of his humiliation till his resurrection: not only in that obedience he performed through the course of his life, but also in the obedience he performed in laying down his life.

3. It was by the *same things* that Christ hath satisfied God's justice, and also purchased eternal happiness. He did not make satisfaction by some things, and then work out righteousness by other different things; but in the *same acts* by which he wrought out righteousness, he also made satisfaction, but only taken in a different relation. One and the same act of Christ, considered with respect to the obedience there was in it, was part of his righteousness, and purchased heaven: but considered with respect to the self-denial, and difficulty, and humiliation, with which he performed it, had the nature of satisfaction for sin, and procured our pardon. Thus his

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going about doing good, preaching the gospel, and teaching his disciples, was a part of his righteousness, and the purchase of heaven, as it was done in obedience to the Father; and the same was a part of his satisfaction, as he did it with great labour, trouble, and weariness, and under great temptations, exposing himself hereby to reproach and contempt. So his laying down his life had the nature of satisfaction to God's offended justice, considered as his bearing punishment in our stead: but considered as an act of obedience to God, who had given him this command, that he should lay down his life for sinners, it was a part of his righteousness and purchase, and as much the principal part of his righteousness as it was the principal part of his satisfaction. And to instance in his circumcision, what he suffered in it, had the nature of satisfaction: the blood that was shed therein was propitiatory blood; but as it was a conformity to the law of Moses, it was part of his meritorious righteousness. Though it was not properly the act of human nature, he being an infant; yet the human nature being the subject of it, and being the act of his *person*, it was accepted as an act of his obedience, as our mediator.—And even his being born in such a low condition, has the nature of satisfaction by reason of the humiliation that was in it; and of righteousness, as it was the act of his *person* in obedience to the Father, what the will of the human nature did acquiesce in, though there was no act of the will of the human nature prior to it.—These things may suffice to have been observed in general, concerning the purchase Christ made of redemption.

SECT. III.

Those things in particular by which the Purchase was made.—Christ's Obedience and Righteousness.

I NOW proceed to consider the things that passed during the time of Christ's humiliation, and first, with respect to his *obedience and righteousness.* And this is subject to a threefold distribution. I shall therefore consider his obedience, with respect to the *laws* which he obeyed—the *different stages of his life* in which he performed it—and the *virtues he exercised* in his obedience.

I. THE first distribution of the acts of Christ's righteousness is with respect to *the laws which he obeyed.* But here it must be observed in general, that all the precepts which Christ obeyed may be reduced to one law, and that is what the apostle

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calls *the law of works*, Rom. iii. 27. Every command that Christ obeyed may be reduced to that great and everlasting law of God that is contained in the covenant of works, that eternal rule of right which God had established between himself and mankind. Christ came into the world to fulfil and answer the covenant of works, that is, the covenant that is to stand for ever as a rule of judgment. The covenant that we had broken, was the covenant that must be fulfilled.

This law of works indeed includes all the laws of God that ever have been given to mankind; for it is a general rule of the law of works, and indeed of the law of nature, That God is to be obeyed, and that he must be submitted to in whatever positive precept he is pleased to give. It is a rule of the law of works, That men should obey their *earthly* parents: and it is certainly as much a rule of the same law, That we should obey our *heavenly* Father: and so the law of works requires obedience to all the positive commands of God. It required Adam's obedience to that positive command, Not to eat of the forbidden fruit; and it required obedience of the Jews to all the positive commands of their institution. When God commanded Jonah to arise and go to Nineveh, the law of works required him to obey: and so it required Christ's obedience to all the positive commands which God gave him.

But, more particularly, *the commands of God which Christ obeyed*, were of three kinds; they were such as he was subject to, either merely *as man*, or *as he was a Jew*, or purely *as Mediator*.

1. He obeyed those commands which he was subject to merely as *man*. These were the commands of the moral law, which was the same with that which was given at Mount Sinai, written in two tables of stone, which are obligatory on mankind of all nations and all ages of the world.

2. He obeyed all those laws he was subject to as he was *a Jew*. Thus he was subject to the ceremonial law, and was conformed to it. He was conformed to it in his being circumcised the eighth day; and he strictly obeyed it in going up to Jerusalem to the temple three times a year; at least after he was come to the age of twelve years, which seems to have been the age when the males began to go up to the temple. And so Christ constantly attended the service of the temple, and of the synagogues.

To this head of his obedience may be reduced his submission to John's baptism. For it was a special command to the Jews, to go forth to John the Baptist, and be baptized of him; and therefore Christ, being a Jew, was subject to this command: and therefore, when he came to be baptized of John, and John objected, that he had more need to come to

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him to be baptized of him, he gives this reason for it, That it was needful that he should do it, *that he might fulfil all righteousness.* (See Matt. iii. 13—15.)

3. Christ was subject to *the mediatorial law;* or that which related purely to his mediatorial office. Such were the commands which the Father gave him to teach such doctrines, to preach the gospel, to work such miracles, to call such disciples, to appoint such ordinances, and finally to lay down his life: for he did all these things in obedience to the commands he had received of the Father, as he often tells us. (John x. 18. xiv. 31.) These commands he was not subject to merely as man; for they did not belong to other men: nor yet was he subject to them as a Jew; for they were no part of the Mosaic law: but they were commands he had received of the Father, that purely respected his mediatorial office.

Christ's righteousness, by which he merited heaven for himself, and all who believe in him, consists principally in his obedience to this mediatorial law: for in fulfilling this law consisted his chief work and business in the world. The history of the evangelists is chiefly taken up in giving an account of his obedience to this law. This part of his obedience was attended with the greatest difficulty; and therefore his obedience in it was most meritorious. What Christ had to do in the world by virtue of his being Mediator, was infinitely more difficult than what he had to do merely as a man or as a Jew. To his obedience to this mediatorial law belongs his going through his last sufferings, beginning with his agony in the garden, and ending with his resurrection.

As the obedience of the first Adam, wherein his righteousness would have consisted, if he had stood, would have mainly consisted in his obedience to that special law to which he was subject as moral head and surety of mankind, even the command of abstaining from the tree of knowledge of good and evil; so the obedience of the second Adam, wherein his righteousness consists, lies mainly in his obedience to that special law to which he was subject as mediator and surety for man.

Before I proceed to the next distribution of Christ's righteousness, I would observe three things concerning his obedience to these laws.

1. He performed that obedience to them which was in every respect *perfect.* It was perfect with respect to the *work* commanded; and the *principle* from which he obeyed. It was perfect with respect to the *ends* he acted for; he never had any by-ends, but aimed perfectly at such as the law of God required. It was perfect with respect to the *manner* of per-

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formance; every circumstance of each act was perfectly conformed to the command. It was perfect with respect to the *degree* of the performance: he acted wholly up to the rule.—It was perfect with respect to the *constancy* of obedience, without any interruption; and with respect to *perseverance*. He held out in perfect obedience to the very end, in all the changes he passed through, and all the trials that were before him.

The meritoriousness of Christ's obedience, depends on the perfection of it. If it had failed in any instance, it could not have been meritorious: for imperfect obedience is not accepted as any obedience at all in the sight of the law of works, to which Christ was subject. That is not accepted as obedience to a law that does not fully answer it.

2. Christ's obedience was performed through the greatest trials and temptations that ever any obedience was. His obedience was attended with the greatest difficulties, and most extreme abasement; which was another thing that rendered it more meritorious and thank-worthy. To obey another when his commands are easy, is not so worthy, as it is to obey when it cannot be done without great difficulty.

3. He performed this obedience with infinite *respect* to God, and the honour of his law. The obedience he performed was with infinitely greater love to God, and regard to his authority, than that of angels. The angels perform their obedience with a sinless perfection of love; but Christ performed his with infinite love. Though the human nature of Christ was not capable of love absolutely infinite, yet Christ's obedience in that nature, is the obedience of his person, as God-man; and therefore there was infinite love manifest in that obedience. And this, together with the infinite dignity of the person who obeyed, rendered his obedience infinitely meritorious.

II. The second distribution of the acts of Christ's obedience, is with respect to *the different parts of his life*, wherein they were performed. And in this respect they may be divided into those which were performed in private life, and those which were performed in his public ministry.

1st, Those acts he performed during his *private life*.—He was perfectly obedient in his childhood. He infinitely differed from other children, who, as soon as they begin to act, begin to sin and rebel. He was subject to his earthly parents, though he was Lord of all, Luke ii. 51; and was found about his Father's business even when a child, Luke ii. 42.—He then began to fulfil the mediatorial law, which the Father had given him. He continued his private life for about thirty years, dwelling at Nazareth, in the house of his reputed father Joseph, where he served God in a private

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capacity, and in following a mechanical trade, the business of a carpenter.

2dly, Those acts which he performed during his *public ministry*, which began when he was about thirty years of age, and continued for the three last years and a half of his life.—Most of the evangelic history is taken up in giving an account of what passed during that time. Indeed all the history of Matthew, except the two first chapters; the whole of Mark; all the gospel of John; and all of Luke, except the two first chapters; excepting also what we find in the evangelists concerning the ministry of John the Baptist. Christ's first appearing in his public ministry, is what is often called his *coming* in scripture. Thus John speaks of Christ's coming as future, though he had been born long before.

Concerning the public ministry of Christ, I would observe the following things.

1. The *forerunner* of Christ's coming in his public ministry was John the Baptist. He came preaching repentance for the remission of sins, to make way for Christ's coming, agreeable to the prophecies of him, Isa. xl. 3—5. and Matt. iv. 5, 6. It is supposed that John the Baptist began his ministry about three years and a half before Christ; so that John's ministry and Christ's put together, made seven years, which was the last of Daniel's weeks; and this time is intended in Dan. ix. 27. *He will confirm the covenant with many for one week.* Christ came in the midst of this week of years, as Daniel foretold: *And in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.*

John the Baptist's ministry consisted principally in preaching the law, to awaken and convince men of sin, to prepare them for the coming of Christ, and to comfort them, as the law is to prepare the heart for the entertainment of the gospel. A very remarkable outpouring of the spirit of God attended John's ministry; and the effect of it was, that Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, were awakened and convinced. They went out to him, and submitted to his baptism, confessing their sins. John was the greatest of all the prophets who came before Christ, Matt. xi. 11. *Among those that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist;* i. e. he had the most honourable office. He was as the morning-star, which is the harbinger of the approaching day, and forerunner of the rising sun. The other prophets were stars that gave light in the night; but those stars went out on the approach of the gospel-day. Now the coming of Christ being very nigh, the morning star comes before him, the brightest of all the stars, as John the Baptist was, in the sense mentioned, the greatest of all the prophets. And when Christ came in his public ministry, the light of

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that morning-star decreased too; as we see, when the sun rises, it diminishes the light of the morning-star. So John the Baptist says of himself, John iii. 30. *He must increase, but I must decrease.* And soon after Christ began his public ministry, John the Baptist was put to death; as the morning-star is visible a little while after the sun is risen, yet soon goes out.

2. Christ's entrance on his public ministry was by *baptism*, followed with the *temptation* in the wilderness. His baptism was as it were his solemn inauguration, by which he entered on his ministry; and was attended with his being anointed with the Holy Ghost, in a solemn and visible manner, the Holy Ghost descending upon him symbolically, in a visible shape, like a dove, attended with a voice from heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, Matt. iii. 16, 17. After this he was led by the devil into the wilderness. Satan made a violent attack upon him at his first entrance on his work; and now he had a remarkable trial of his obedience; but he got the victory. He who had such success with the first Adam, had none with the second.

3. I would take notice of the *work* in which Christ was employed during his ministry. And here are *three* things chiefly to be noticed, viz. his preaching, his working of miracles, and his calling and appointing disciples and ministers of his kingdom.

(1.) His *preaching* the gospel. Great part of the work of his public ministry consisted in this; and much of that obedience by which he purchased salvation for us, was in his speaking those things which the Father commanded him. He more clearly and abundantly revealed the mind and will of God, than ever it had been revealed before. He came from the bosom of the Father, perfectly knew his mind, and was in the best capacity to reveal it. As the sun, as soon as it is risen, begins to shine; so Christ, as soon as he came into his public ministry, began to enlighten the world with his doctrine. As the law was given at Mount Sinai, so Christ delivered his evangelical doctrine, (full of blessings, and not curses,) to a multitude on a mountain, Matt. v.—vii.

When he preached, he did not teach as the scribes, but as one having authority; so that his hearers were astonished at his doctrine. He did not reveal the mind and will of God in the style of the prophets, as "Thus saith the Lord;" but in such a style as this, "I say unto you," "Verily, verily, I say unto you." He delivered his doctrines, not only as the doctrines of God the Father, but as his own doctrines. He gave forth commands, not (as the prophets were wont to do,) as God's commands, but as his own. He spake

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in such a style as this, "This is *my commandment*," John xv. 12. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I *command* you," *ibid.* 14.

(2.) Another thing that Christ was employed in during the course of his ministry, was *working miracles*. Concerning which we may observe,—Their *multitude*. Besides particular instances, we often have an account of multitudes coming at once with diseases, and his healing them. They were *works of mercy*. In them was displayed not only his infinite power and greatness, but his infinite mercy and goodness. He went about doing good, healing the sick, restoring sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and the proper use of their limbs to the lame and halt; feeding the hungry, cleansing the leprous, and raising the dead.

They were almost all of them *such as had been spoken of as the peculiar works of God*, in the Old Testament. So with respect to stilling the sea, Psalm cvii. 29. *He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still;* walking on the sea in a storm, Job ix. 8. *Which alone—treadeth upon the waves of the sea;* and casting out devils, Psalm lxxiv. 14. *Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces.* So as to feeding a multitude in a wilderness: Deut. viii. 16. *Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna;* telling man's thoughts, Amos iv. 13. *Lo, he that declareth unto man what is his thought—the Lord, the God of hosts is his name;* and raising the dead, Psalm lxviii. 20. *Unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.* So as to opening the eyes of the blind, Psalm cxlvi. 8. *The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind;* healing the sick, Psalm ciii. 3. *Who healeth all thy diseases;* and lifting up those who are bowed together, Psalm cxlvi. 8. *The Lord raiseth them that are bowed down.*

They were in general such works as were *images of the great work which he came to work on man's heart*; representing that inward, spiritual cleansing, healing, renovation, and resurrection, of which all his redeemed are the subjects.—*He wrought them by his own power, and not as the other prophets did.* They were wont to work all their miracles in the name of the Lord; but Christ wrought in his own name. Moses was forbidden to enter into Canaan, because he seemed by his speech to assume to himself the honour of working only one miracle. Nor did Christ work miracles as the *apostles* did; but by his own authority and will: Thus, saith he, *I will; be thou clean*, Matt. viii. 3. And in the same strain he put the question, *Believe ye that I am able to do this?* Matt. ix. 28.

(3.) Another thing that Christ did in the course of his ministry, was to *call his disciples*. He called many disciples, whom he employed as ministers. He sent seventy at one time

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in this work: but there were twelve that he set apart as apostles, who were the grand ministers of his kingdom, and as it were the twelve foundations of his church. (See Rev. xxi. 14.) These were the main instruments of setting up his kingdom in the world, and therefore shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

4. I would observe how he *finished* his ministry. And this was, in giving his dying *counsels* to his disciples, and all that should be his disciples, which we have recorded particularly in the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John's Gospel. In instituting a solemn *memorial* of his death, the sacrament of the Lord's supper, wherein we have a representation of his body broken, and of his blood shed. In *offering* up himself a *sacrifice* to God, in his last sufferings. This act he did as God's minister, as God's anointed priest; and it was the greatest act of his public ministry, the greatest act of his obedience, by which he purchased heaven for believers. The priests of old used to do many other things as God's ministers; but the highest execution of their office was their actually offering sacrifice on the altar. So the greatest thing that Christ did in the execution of his priestly office, and the greatest thing that he ever did, and the greatest thing that ever was done, was the offering up himself a sacrifice to God. Herein he was the antetype of all that had been done by all the priests, in all their sacrifices and offerings, from the beginning of the world.

III. The third distribution of the acts by which Christ purchased redemption, regards *the virtues that he exercised and manifested* in them. Christ, in doing his work for our redemption, exercised every possible virtue and grace. Indeed, there are some particular virtues that sinful man may have, which were not in Christ; not from any defect of virtue, but because his virtue was perfect, and without defect. Such is the virtue of repentance, brokenness of heart for sin, mortification, and denying of lust. Christ had no sin of his own to repent of, nor any lust to deny. But all virtues which do not presuppose sin, were in him in a higher degree than in any mere creature. Every virtue in him was perfect. Virtue itself was greater in him than in any other; and it was under greater advantages to shine in him than in any other. Strict virtue shines most when most tried; but never any virtue had such trials as Christ's had.

The virtues that Christ exercised in his work may be divided into three sorts, *viz.* the virtues which more immediately respect *God*, those which immediately respected *himself*, and those which immediately respect *men*.

1. Those *virtues which more immediately respect God.* There appeared in him a holy *fear* and *reverence* towards God

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the Father. Christ had a greater trial of his virtue in this respect than any other had, from the honourableness of his person. This was the temptation of the angels that fell to cast off their worship of God and reverence of his majesty, that they were beings of such exalted dignity themselves. But Christ was infinitely more worthy and honourable than they; for he was the eternal Son of God, and his person was equal to the person of the Father; and yet, as he had taken on him the office of mediator, and the nature of man, he was full of reverence towards God. He manifested a wonderful *love* towards God. The angels give great testimonies of their love towards God, in their constancy and agility in doing his will; and many saints have given great testimonies of their love, who, from love to God, endured great labours and sufferings; but none ever gave such testimonies of love to God as Christ has given. He manifested the most wonderful *submission* to the will of God. Never was any one's submission so tried as his was. And he manifested the most wonderful spirit of *obedience* that ever was manifested.

2. In this work he most wonderfully manifested those *virtues which more immediately respected himself;* as humility, patience, and contempt of the world. Christ, though he was the most excellent and honourable, yet was the most *humble;* yea, he was the most humble of all creatures. No angel or man ever equalled him in humility, though he was the highest in dignity and honourableness. Christ would have been under the greatest temptations to pride, if it had been possible for any thing to be a temptation to him. The temptation of the angels that fell was the dignity of their nature, and the honourableness of their circumstances; but Christ was infinitely more honourable than they. The human nature of Christ was so honoured as to be in the same person with the eternal Son of God, who was equal with God; and yet that human nature was not at all lifted up with pride. Nor was the man Christ Jesus at all lifted up with pride, with all those wonderful works which he wrought, of healing the sick, curing the blind, lame, and maimed, and raising the dead. And though he knew that God had appointed him to be the king over heaven and earth, angels and men, as he says, Matt. xi. 27, *All things are delivered unto me of my Father;* though he knew he was such an infinitely honourable person, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God; and though he knew he was the heir of the Father's kingdom: yet, such was his humility, that he did not disdain to be abased and depressed down into lower and viler circumstances and sufferings than ever any other elect creature was; so that he became least of all, and lowest of all. The proper trial and evidence of humility is, stooping or complying with those acts or circumstances, when called to it,

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which are very low, and contain great abasement. But none ever stooped so low as Christ, if we consider either the infinite height that he stooped from, or the great depth to which he stooped. Such was his humility, that though he knew his infinite worthiness of honour, and of being honoured ten thousand times as much as the highest prince on earth, or angel in heaven, yet he did not think it too much when called to it, to be bound as a malefactor, to become the laughing-stock of the vilest of men, to be crowned with thorns, to have a mock robe put upon him, and to be crucified like a slave and malefactor, as one of the meanest and worst of vagabonds and miscreants, and an accursed enemy of God and men, who was not fit to live. And this was not for himself, but for some of the meanest and vilest of creatures, even some of those accursed wretches that crucified him. Was not this a wonderful manifestation of humility, when he cheerfully and most freely submitted to this abasement?—And how did his *patience* shine forth under all the terrible sufferings which he endured; when he was dumb, and opened not his mouth, but went as a lamb to the slaughter! And what *contempt* of the glory of this world was there, when he rather chose this meanness and suffering, than to be invested with the external glories of an earthly prince, as the multitude often solicited him!

3. Christ, in a wonderful manner, exercised those *virtues which more immediately respect other men.* And these may be summed up under two heads, viz. meekness and love.

Christ's *meekness* was his humble calmness of spirit under the provocations that he met with. The greatness of provocation lies in two things, *viz.* in the degree of opposition by which the provocation is given; and, secondly, in the degree of the unreasonableness of that opposition, or in its being very causeless, and without reason, and the great degree of obligation to the contrary. Now, if we consider both these things, no man ever met with such provocations as Christ did, when he was upon earth. How much he was hated, what abuses he suffered from the vilest of men; how great his sufferings, and how spiteful and contemptuous they were in offering him those abuses! How causeless and unreasonable were these abuses, how undeserving he was of them, yea, how much deserving of the contrary, *viz.* of love, and honour, and good treatment at their hands. If we consider these things, no man ever met with a thousandth part of the provocation that Christ met with from men; and yet how meek was he under all! how composed and quiet his spirit! how far from being in a ruffle and tumult! When he was reviled, he reviled not again; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. No appearance was there of a revengeful spirit; on the contrary, what a spirit of forgiveness did he exhibit! so that he

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fervently and effectually prayed for their forgiveness, when they were in the highest act of provocation that ever they perpetrated, viz. nailing him to the cross: Luke xxiii. 34. *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*

And never did there appear such an instance of *love* to men. Christ's love to men, especially in going through his last sufferings, and offering up his life and soul under those sufferings, which was his greatest act of love, was far beyond all parallel. There have been very remarkable manifestations of love in some of the saints, as in the apostle Paul, the apostle John, and others; but the love to men that Christ shewed when on earth, as much exceeded the love of all other men, as the ocean exceeds a small stream.

And it is to be observed, that all the virtues which appeared in Christ shone brightest in the close of his life, under the trials he met with then. Eminent virtue always shows brightest in the fire. Pure gold shows its purity chiefly in the furnace. It was chiefly under those trials which Christ underwent in the close of his life, that his love to God, his honour of God's majesty, his regard to the honour of his law, his spirit of obedience, his humility, contempt of the world, his patience, meekness, and spirit of forgiveness towards men, appeared. Indeed, every thing that Christ did to work out redemption for us appears mainly in the close of his life. Here mainly is his satisfaction for sin, and here chiefly is his merit of eternal life for sinners, and here chiefly appears the brightness of his example, which he hath set us for imitation. Thus we have taken a brief view of the thing whereby the purchase of redemption was made, with respect to his *righteousness* that appeared in them.

SECT. IV.

Christ's Sufferings and Humiliation.

Among those things in particular by which the purchase was made, we must reckon the sufferings and humiliation to which Christ was subject, whence arose the satisfaction he made for sin.

I. He was subject to uncommon humiliation and suffering in his *infancy*. His mother not only suffered in bearing him, but when her travail came upon her, it is said, *there was no room in the inn*, Luke ii. 7. She was forced to betake herself to a stable, where Christ was born. And we may conclude, that his mother's circumstances in other respects were proportionably strait and difficult, and that she was destitute of the conveniencies necessary for so young an infant which others

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were wont to have. Besides, he was persecuted in his infancy. They began to seek his life as soon as he was born. Herod, the chief man of the land, was so engaged to kill him, that, in order to it, he killed all the children in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under. And Christ suffered banishment in his infancy, was driven out of his native country into Egypt, and without doubt suffered much by being carried so long a journey, when he was so young, into a strange country.

II. Christ was subject to great humiliation in his *private* life at Nazareth. He there led a servile, obscure life, in a mean, laborious occupation; for he is called not only the *carpenter's son*, but the *carpenter:* Mark vi. 3. *Is not this the carpenter, the brother of James and Joses, and Juda, and Simon?* By hard labour, he earned his bread before he ate it, and so suffered that curse which God pronounced on Adam, Gen. iii. 13. *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.* Let us consider how great a degree of humiliation the glorious Son of God, the creator of heaven and earth, was subject to in this, that for about thirty years he should live a private, obscure life among labouring men, and all this while be overlooked, not taken notice of in the world, more than other common labourers. Christ's humiliation, in some respects, was greater in private life than in the time of his public ministry. There were many manifestations of his glory in the word he preached, and the miracles he wrought: but the first thirty years of his life he spent among ordinary men, as it were in silence. There was not any thing to make him to be taken notice of more than any ordinary mechanic, only the spotless purity and eminent holiness of his life; and that was in a great measure hid in obscurity, so that he was little taken notice of till after his baptism.

III. Christ was the subject of great humiliation and suffering during his *public* life, from his baptism till the night wherein he was betrayed.

1. He suffered great *poverty*, so that he had not *where to lay his head*, (Matth. viii. 20, compared with John xviii. 1, 2, and Luke xxi. 27, and chap. xxii. 30.) So that what was spoken of Christ in Cant. v. 2, *My head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night*, was literally fulfilled. And through his poverty he doubtless was often tried with hunger, thirst, and cold, Matt. iv. 2; xxi. 18. His mother and natural relations were poor, not able to help him; and he was maintained by the charity of some of his disciples while he lived. So we read in Luke viii. at the beginning, of certain women that followed him, and ministered unto him of their substance. He was so poor, that he was not able to pay the demanded tribute without a miracle. See Matt. xvii. 27.

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And when he ate his last passover, it was not at his own charge, but that of another, as appears by Luke xxii. 7, &c. And from his poverty he had no grave of his own to be buried in. It was the manner of the Jews, unless they were poor, to prepare themselves a sepulchre while they lived. But Christ had no land of his own, though he was possessor of heaven and earth; and therefore was buried by Joseph of Arimathea's charity, and in his tomb, which he had prepared for himself.

2. He suffered great hatred and *reproach*. He was despised and rejected of men; one of little account, slighted for his low parentage, and his mean city Nazareth. He was reproached as a glutton and drunkard, a friend of publicans and sinners; was called a deceiver of the people; sometimes was called a madman, and a Samaritan, and one possessed with a devil, (John vii. 20, viii. 48, and x. 20.) He was called a blasphemer, and was accounted, by many, a wizzard, or one that wrought miracles by the black art, and by communication with Beelzebub. They excommunicated him, and agreed to excommunicate any man that should own him, (John ix. 22.) They wished him dead, and were continually seeking to murder him; sometimes by force, and sometimes by craft. They often took up stones to stone him, and once led him to the brow of a hill, intending to throw him down the precipice, to dash him in pieces against the rocks.

He was thus hated and reproached by his own visible people, John i. 11. *He came to his own, and his own received him not.* And he was principally despised and hated by those who were in chief repute, and were their greatest men. Indeed the hatred was general. Into whatever part of the land he went, he met with hatred and contempt; in Capernaum, and Jericho; in Jerusalem, which was the holy city, even when he went to the temple to worship; also in Nazareth, his own city, among his own relations, and his old neighbours.

3. He suffered the buffetings of Satan in an uncommon manner. One time in particular, he had a long conflict with the devil, when he was in the wilderness forty days, with wild beasts and devils; and was so exposed to the devil's power, that he was carried about by him from place to place, while he was otherwise in a very suffering state.—So much for the humiliation and suffering of Christ's public life, from his baptism to the night wherein he was betrayed.

IV. I come now to his last humiliation and sufferings, from the evening of the night wherein he was betrayed, to his resurrection. And here was his greatest humiliation and suffering, by which principally he made satisfaction to the justice of God for the sins of men. First, his life was sold by one of his own disciples for thirty pieces of silver; which was the price of the life of a servant, Exod. xxi. 32. Then he

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was in dreadful agony in the garden. There came such a dismal gloom upon his soul, that he began to be sorrowful and very heavy, and said, that his *soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and was sore amazed.* So violent was the agony of his soul, as to force the blood through the pores of his skin; so that while his soul was overwhelmed with amazing sorrow, his body was clotted with blood. The disciples, who used to be as his friends and family, at this time, above all, appeared cold towards him, and unconcerned for him, at the same time that his father's face was hid from him. Judas, to whom Christ had been so very merciful, and who was treated as one of his family or familiar friends, comes and betrays him in the most deceitful, treacherous manner. The officers and soldiers apprehend and bind him; his disciples forsake him, and flee; his own best friends do not stand by him to comfort him in this time of his distress. He is led away as a malefactor to appear before the priests and scribes, his venomous, mortal enemies, that they might sit as his judges. Now they had got him into their hands, they sat up all night, to have the pleasure of insulting him. But because they aimed at nothing short of his life, they set themselves to find some colour to put him to death, and seek for witnesses against him. When none appeared, they set some to bear false witness; and when their witness did not agree together, they examined him, in hope to catch something out of his own mouth. They hoped he would say, that he was the Son of God, and then they thought they should have enough. But because they see they are not like to obtain this, they adjure him, in the name of God, to say whether he was or not; and when he confessed that he was, then it was a time of rejoicing with them, which they show, by spitting in his face, blindfolding him, and striking him in the face with the palms of their hands, and then bidding him prophecy who it was that struck him; thus ridiculing him for pretending to be a prophet. And the very servants have a hand in the sport, Mark xiv. 65. *And the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.*

During the sufferings of the night, Peter, one of the chief of his own disciples, instead of standing by to comfort, appears ashamed to own him, and denies and renounces him with oaths and curses. And after the chief priests and elders had finished the night in so shamefully abusing him, in the morning (the morning of the most wonderful day that ever was,) they led him away to Pilate, to be condemned to death by him, because they had not the power of life and death in their own hands. He is brought before Pilate's judgment-seat, and there the priests and elders accuse him as a traitor. And when Pilate, upon examining into the matter, declared he found no fault in him, the Jews were but the more fierce and violent to have

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him condemned. Upon which Pilate, after clearing him, very unjustly brings him upon a second trial; and then not finding any thing against him, acquits him again. Pilate treats him as a poor worthless fellow; but is ashamed, on so little pretence, to condemn him as a traitor.

And then he was sent to Herod, to be tried by him, and was brought before his judgment-seat; his enemies followed, and virulently accused him before Herod. Herod does not condemn him as a traitor, or one that would set up for a king, but looks upon him as Pilate did, as a poor worthless creature, not worthy to be noticed, and makes a mere laugh of the Jews accusing him as dangerous to Cæsar, as one setting up to be a king against him; and therefore, in derision, dresses him up in a mock robe, makes sport of him, and sends him back through the streets of Jerusalem to Pilate, with the mock robe on.

Then the Jews prefer Barabbas before him, and are instant and violent with loud vociferations to Pilate, to crucify him. So Pilate, after he had cleared him twice, and Herod once, very unrighteously brings him on trial the third time, to try if he could not find something sufficient to crucify him. Christ was stripped and scourged; thus he gave his back to the smiters. After that, though Pilate still declared that he found no fault in him, yet, so unjust was he, that, for fear of the Jews, he delivered Christ to be crucified. But before they execute the sentence, his spiteful and cruel enemies take the pleasure of mocking him again; they get round him, and make a set business of it. They stripped him, put on him a scarlet robe, a reed in his hand, and a crown of thorns on his head. Both Jews and Roman soldiers were united in the transaction; they bow the knee before him, and in derision cry, "Hail, king of the Jews." They spit upon him also, take the reed out of his hand, and smite him on the head. After this they led him away to crucify him, made him carry his own cross, till he sunk under it, his strength being spent; and then they laid it on one Simon, a Cyrenian.

At length, being come to Mount Calvary, they execute the sentence which Pilate had so unrighteously pronounced. They nail him to his cross by his hands and feet, then raise it erect, and fix one end in the ground, he being still suspended on it by the nails which pierced his hands and feet. Now Christ's sufferings are come to the extremity: now the cup, which he so earnestly prayed might pass from him, is come; he must, he does drink it. In those days crucifixion was the most tormenting kind of death by which any were wont to be executed. There was no death wherein the person experienced so much of mere torment; and hence the Roman word, which signifies *torment*, is taken from this kind of death.——Besides what our Lord endured in this excruciating corporeal death,

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he endured vastly more in his soul. Now was that travail of his soul, of which we read in the prophet; now it pleased God to bruise him, and to put him to grief; now he poured out his soul unto death, as in Isa. liii. And if the mere forethought of this cup made him sweat blood, how much more dreadful and excruciating must the drinking of it have been! Many martyrs have endured much in their bodies, while their souls have been joyful, and have sung for joy, whereby they have been supported under the sufferings of their outward man, and have triumphed over them. But this was not the case with Christ; he had no such support; but his sufferings were chiefly those of the mind, though the other were extremely great. In his crucifixion Christ did not sweat blood, as he had done before; not because his agony was now not so great, but his blood had vent another way. But though he did not sweat blood, yet such was the sufferings of his soul, that probably it rent his vitals; when his side was pierced, there came forth blood and water. And so here was a kind of literal fulfilment of that in Psal. xxii. 14. *I am poured out like water:—my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels.*

Now, under all these sufferings, the Jews still mock him; and, wagging their heads, say, *Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.* And even the chief priests, scribes, and elders, joined in the cry, saying, *He saved others, himself he cannot save.* And probably the devil at the same time tormented him to the utmost of his power; and hence it is said, Luke xxii. 53. *This is your hour, and the power of darkness.*

Under these sufferings, Christ, having cried out once and again with a loud voice, at last said, IT IS FINISHED, (John xix. 30.) *and bowed the head, and gave up the ghost.* And thus was finished the greatest and most wonderful thing that ever was done. Now the angels beheld the most wonderful sight that ever they saw. Now was accomplished the main thing that had been pointed at by the various institutions of the ceremonial law, by all the typical dispensations, and by all the sacrifices from the beginning of the world.

Christ being thus brought under the power of death, continued under it till the morning of next day but one. Then was finished that great work, the purchase of our redemption, for which such great preparation had been made from the beginning of the world. Then was finished all that was required in order to satisfy the threatenings of the law, and all that was necessary in order to satisfy divine justice; then the utmost that vindictive justice demanded, even the whole debt, was paid. Then was finished the whole of the purchase of eternal life. And now there is no need of any thing more

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to be done towards a purchase of salvation for sinners; nor has ever any thing been done since, nor will any thing more be done for ever and ever.

PART III.

Improvement of the Second Period.

In surveying the history of redemption, we have now shown how this work was carried on through the two former of the three main periods into which this whole space of time was divided, *viz.* from the fall to the incarnation of Christ, and from thence to the end of the time of Christ's humiliation. In the first of these periods we have particularly explained how God prepared the way for Christ's appearing and purchasing redemption; and, in the second period, how that purchase was made and finished. I would now make some *improvement* of what has been said on both these subjects considered conjunctly.

SECT. I.

An Use of Reproof.

I begin with an use of reproof; a reproof of unbelief, of self-righteousness, and of a careless neglect of the salvation of Christ.

I. How greatly do these things reprove those who do not believe in, but reject the Lord Jesus Christ! *i. e.* all those who do not heartily receive him. Persons may receive him in profession outwardly, and may wish that they had some of those benefits that Christ has purchased, and yet their hearts not receive him. They may be hearty in nothing that they do towards Christ; they may have no high esteem of, nor any sincere respect to Christ; they may never have opened the door of their heart to him, but have kept him shut out all their days, ever since his salvation has been offered to them. Though their hearts have been opened to others, their doors flung wide open to them, with free admittance at all times; though they have been embraced, and the thrones of their hearts have been allowed them; yet Christ has always been shut out, and they have been deaf to all his calls. They never could find an inclination of heart to receive him, nor would they ever trust in him.

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Let me now call upon such to consider, how great is their sin, in thus rejecting Jesus Christ. You slight the glorious person, for whose coming God made such great preparation in such a series of wonderful providences from the beginning of the world, and whom, after all things were made ready, God sent into the world, bringing to pass a thing before unknown, *viz.* the union of the divine nature with the human in one person. You have been guilty of slighting that great Saviour, who, after such preparation, actually accomplished the purchase of redemption; and who, after he had spent three or four and thirty years in poverty, labour, and contempt, in purchasing redemption, at last finished the purchase by closing his life under such extreme sufferings as you have heard; and so by his death, and continuing for a time under the power of death, completed the whole. This is the person you reject and despise. You make light of all the glory of his person, and of all the glorious love of God the Father, in sending him into the world, and all his wonderful love appearing in the whole of this affair. That precious stone which God hath laid in Zion for a foundation in such a manner, and by such wonderful works as you have heard, is a stone set at nought by you.

Sinners sometimes are ready to wonder why unbelief should be looked upon as a great sin; but if you consider what you have heard, how can you wonder? If this Saviour is so great, and this work so great, and such great things have been done in order to it, truly there is no cause of wonder that the rejection of this Saviour is so provoking to God. It brings greater guilt than the sins of the worst of heathens, who never heard of those things, nor have had this Saviour offered to them.

II. What has been said, affords matter of reproof to those who, instead of believing in Christ, trust in themselves for salvation. Is it not a common thing with men to take it upon themselves to do that great work which Christ came into the world to do? to trust in their prayers, their good conversations, the pains they take in religion, the reformation of their lives, and their self-denial, in order to recommend them to God, to make some atonement for their past sins. Let such consider three things:

1. How *great* a thing that is which you take upon you. It is to do the work of the great Saviour of the world.—Though you are poor, worthless, vile, and polluted, yet you arrogantly take upon you that very work for which the only-begotten Son of God became man; and in order to which God employed four thousand years in all the great dispensations of his providences, aiming chiefly to make way for Christ's coming to do this work. This is the work that you

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foolishly think yourself sufficient for; as though your prayers and other performances were excellent enough for this purpose. Consider how vain is the thought which you entertain of yourself. How must such arrogance appear in the sight of Christ, whom it cost so much. It was not to be obtained even by him, so great and glorious a person, at a cheaper rate than his going through a sea of blood, and passing through the midst of the furnace of God's wrath. And how vain must your arrogance appear in the sight of God, when he sees you imagining yourself sufficient, and your worthless, polluted performances excellent enough for the accomplishing of that work of his own Son, to prepare the way for which he was employed in ordering all the great affairs of the world for so many ages!

2. If there be ground for you to trust, as you do, in your own righteousness, then all that Christ did to purchase salvation, and all that God did from the fall of man to prepare the way for it, is *in vain*. Your self-righteousness charges God with the greatest folly, as though he has done all things in vain, to bring about an accomplishment of what you alone, with your poor polluted prayers, and the little pains you take in religion, are sufficient to accomplish for yourself. For if you can appease God's anger, and commend yourself to him by these means, then you have no need of Christ; Gal. ii. 21. *If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.*

If you can do this by your prayers and good works, Christ might have spared his pains; he might have spared his blood; he might have kept within the bosom of his Father, without coming down into this evil world, to be despised, reproached, and persecuted to death. God needed not have busied himself, as he did for four thousand years, causing so many changes in the state of the world all that while, in order to bring about that which you can accomplish in a few days, only with the trouble of a few religious performances. Consider, what greater folly could you have devised to charge upon God than this, that all those things were done so needlessly; when, instead of all this, he might only have called you forth, and committed the business to you, which you think you can do so easily. Alas! how blind are natural men! and especially how vain are the thoughts which they have of themselves! How ignorant of their own littleness and pollution! What great things do they assume to themselves!

3. You that trust to your own righteousness, arrogate to yourselves the honour of the *greatest* thing that ever God himself did. You seem not only sufficient to perform *divine* works, but such is your pride and vanity, that you are not content without taking upon you to do the very *greatest* work that ever God himself wrought. You see by what has been

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said, how God has subordinated all his other works to this of redemption. God's works of providence are greater than those of creation; and all his works of providence, from the beginning of the generations of men, were in order to make way for the purchasing of redemption. To take on yourself to work out redemption, is a greater thing than if you had taken it upon you to create a world. What a figure you would make, if you should seriously go about to create a world; or, decking yourself with majesty, should pretend to speak the word of power, and call an universe out of nothing, intending to go on in order, and say, "Let there be light; let there be a firmament," &c. But then consider, that in attempting to work out redemption for yourself, you attempt a *greater* thing than this, and are *serious* in it, and will not be dissuaded from it. You strive in it, are full of the thought that you are sufficient for it, and big with hopes of accomplishing it.

You take upon you to do the very greatest and *most difficult* part of this work, *viz.* to purchase redemption. Christ can accomplish other parts of this work without cost; but this part cost him his life, as well as innumerable pains and labours. Yet this is that part which self-righteous persons go about to accomplish for themselves. If all the angels in heaven had been sufficient for this work, would God have set himself to effect such things as he did in order to it? and would he ever have sent his own Son, the creator of the angels, into the world, to have done and suffered such things?

What self-righteous persons take to themselves, is the same work that Christ was engaged in when he was in his agony and bloody sweat, and when he died on the cross, which was the greatest thing that ever the eyes of angels beheld. Great as it is, they imagine they can do the same that Christ accomplished by it. Their self-righteousness does in effect charge Christ's offering up himself in these sufferings, as the greatest instance of folly that ever men or angels saw, instead of being the most glorious display of the divine wisdom and grace. Yea, self-righteousness makes all that Christ did through the whole course of his life, all that he said and suffered, and his incarnation itself, and not only so, but all that God had been doing in the great dispensations of his providence from the beginning of the world to that time, as nothing but a scene of the most wild, extreme, and transcendent folly.

Is it any wonder, then, that a self-righteous spirit is so represented in scripture, and spoken of, as that which is most fatal to the souls of men? And is it any wonder, that Christ is represented in scripture as being so provoked with the Pharisees and others, who trusted in themselves that they were

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righteous, and were proud of their goodness, and thought that their own performances were a valuable price of God's favour and love?

Let persons hence be warned against a self-righteous spirit. You that are seeking salvation, and taking pains in religion, take heed to yourselves that you do not trust in what you do. Harbour no such thoughts, that God now, seeing how much you are reformed, how you are sometimes affected, will be pacified towards you, and will not be so angry for your former sins; that you shall gain on him by such things, and draw his heart to show you mercy. If you entertain the thought, that God is *obliged* to do it, and does not act justly if he refuse to regard your prayers and pains; if you quarrel with God, and complain of him for not doing it, this shows what your opinion is of your own righteousness, *viz.* that it is a valuable price of salvation, and ought to be accepted of God as such. Such complaining of God, and quarrelling with him, for not taking more notice of your righteousness, plainly shows that you are guilty of arrogance, thinking yourself sufficient to offer the price of your own salvation.

III. What has been said on this subject, affords matter of reproof to those who carelessly *neglect* the salvation of Christ. These live a senseless kind of life, neglect the business of religion and their own souls, not taking any course to get an interest in Christ, or what he has done and suffered, or any part in that glorious salvation he has purchased. They have their minds taken up about the gains of the world, or the vanities and pleasures of youth, and make light of what they hear of Christ's salvation, to that degree, that they do not at present so much as seek after it. Let me here apply myself to you in some expostulatory interrogations.

1. Shall so many prophets, and kings, and righteous men, have their minds so much taken up with the prospect, that the purchase of salvation was to be wrought out in ages long after their death; and will you neglect it when actually accomplished? You have heard what great account the church in all ages made of the future redemption of Christ; how joyfully they expected it, how they spoke of it, how they studied and searched into these things, how they sung joyful songs, and had their hearts greatly engaged about it, though they did not expect that it would be accomplished till many ages after their death, 1 Pet. i. 10—12. How much did Isaiah and Daniel, and other prophets, speak concerning this redemption! And how much were their hearts engaged, and their attention and study fixed upon it! How was David's mind taken up in this subject! He declared that it was all his salvation, and all his desire; 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. How did he employ his voice and harp in celebrating it, and the glorious

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display of divine grace therein exhibited! and all this, although they beheld it not as yet accomplished, but saw that it was to be brought to pass so long a time after their day.—— And before this, how did Abraham and the other patriarchs rejoice in the prospect of Christ's day, and the redemption which he was to purchase! And even the saints before the flood were affected and elated in the expectation of this glorious event, though it was then so long future, and it was so very faintly and obscurely revealed to them.

Now these things are declared to you as actually fulfilled. The church now has seen accomplished all those great things which they so joyfully prophesied of; and you are abundantly shown how those things were accomplished: Matt. xiii. 17. *Verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.* And yet, when these things are thus abundantly set before you as already accomplished, how light do you make of them! How unconcerned are you about them, following other things, and not so much as feeling any interest in them! Indeed your sin is extremely aggravated in the sight of God. God has put you under great advantages for your eternal salvation, far greater than those saints of old enjoyed. He has put you under a more glorious dispensation; has given you a more clear revelation of Christ and his salvation; and yet you neglect all these advantages, and go on in a careless course of life, as though nothing had been done, no such proposals and offers had been made you.

2. Have the angels been so engaged about this salvation which is by Christ ever since the fall of man, though they are not immediately concerned in it, and will you, who need it, and have it offered to you, be so careless about it? You have heard how the angels at first were subjected to Christ as mediator, and how they have all along been ministering spirits to him in this affair. In all the great dispensations which you have heard of from the beginning of the world, they have been active and as a flame of fire in this affair, being most diligently employed as ministering spirits to minister to Christ in this great affair of man's redemption. And when Christ came, how engaged were their minds! They came to Zacharias, to inform him of the coming of Christ's forerunner.—— They came to the Virgin Mary, to inform her of the approaching birth of Christ. They came to Joseph, to warn him of the danger which threatened the new-born Saviour, and to point out to him the means of safety. And how were their minds engaged at the time of the birth of Christ! The whole multitude of the heavenly hosts sang praises upon the occasion, saying, *Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good*

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will towards men. And afterwards, from time to time, they ministered to Christ when on earth; at the time of his temptation, of his agony in the garden, at his resurrection, and at his ascension. All these things show, that they were greatly engaged in this affair; and the scripture informs us, that they pry into these things: 1 Pet. i. 12. *Which things the angels desire to look into.* And how are they represented in the Revelation as being employed in heaven in singing praises to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb! Now, shall these take so much notice of this redemption, and of the purchaser, who need it not for themselves, and have no immediate concern or interest in it, or offer of it; and will you, to whom it is offered, and who are in such extreme necessity of it, neglect and take no notice of it?

3. Did Christ labour so hard, and suffer so much to procure this salvation, and is it not worth the while for you to be at some labour in seeking it? Did our salvation lie with such weight on the mind of Christ, as to induce him to become man, to suffer even death itself, in order to procure it? And is it not worth the while for you, who need this salvation, and must perish eternally without it, to take earnest pains to obtain an interest in it after it is procured, and all things are ready?

4. Shall the great God be so concerned about this salvation, as often to overturn the world to make way for it; and when all is done, is it not worth your seeking after? What great, what wonderful things has he done; removing and setting up kings, raising up a great number of prophets, separating a distinct people from the rest of the world, overturning nations and kingdoms, and often the state of the world; and so has continued bringing about one change and revolution after another for forty centuries in succession, to make way for the procuring of this salvation! And when at the close of these ages, the great Saviour comes, passing through a long series of reproach and suffering, and then suffering all the waves and billows of God's wrath for men's sins, insomuch that they overwhelmed his soul; after all these things done to procure salvation for sinners, is it not worthy of your being so much concerned about it, but that it should be thrown by, and made nothing of, in comparison of worldly gain, gay clothing, or youthful diversions, and other such trifling things?

O! that you who live negligent of this salvation, would consider what you do! What you have heard from this subject, may show you what reason there is in that exclamation of the apostle, Heb. ii. 3. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?* and in Acts xiii. 41. *Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a*

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work which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you. God looks on you as great enemies of the cross of Christ, as adversaries and despisers of all the glory of this great work. And if God has made such account of the glory of salvation as to destroy many nations, in order to prepare the way for the glory of his Son in this affair; how little account will he make of the lives and souls of ten thousand such opposers and despisers as you, who continue impenitent, when your welfare stands in the way of that glory? Why surely you shall be dashed to pieces as a potter's vessel, and trodden down as the mire of the streets. God may, through wonderful patience, bear with hardened careless sinners for awhile; but he will not long bear with such despisers of his dear Son, and his great salvation, the glory of which he has had so much at heart, before he will utterly consume without remedy or mercy.

SECT. II.

An Use of Encouragement.

I WILL conclude with a second use, of encouragement to burdened souls to put their trust in Christ for salvation. To all such as are not careless and negligent, but make seeking an interest in Christ their main business, being sensible in some measure of their necessity, and afraid of the wrath to come; to such, what has been said on this subject holds forth great matter of encouragement, to venture their souls on the Lord Jesus Christ. And as motives proper to excite you so to do, let me lead you to consider two things in particular.

1. The *completeness* of the purchase which has been made. You have heard, that this work of purchasing salvation was wholly finished during the time of Christ's humiliation. When Christ rose from the dead, and was exalted from that abasement to which he submitted for our salvation, the purchase of eternal life was completely made, so that there was no need of any thing more to be done in order to it. But now the servants were sent forth with a message, Matt. xxii. 4. *Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.* Therefore, are your sins many and great? Here is enough done by Christ to procure their pardon. There is no need of any righteousness of yours to obtain your pardon and justification; no, you may come freely, without money and without price. Since therefore there is such a free and gracious invitation given you, come, come naked as you are; come as a poor condemned criminal; come and cast yourself down at Christ's feet, as one justly condemned, and utterly helpless. Here is a

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complete salvation wrought out by Christ, and through him offered to you. Come, therefore, accept of it, and be saved.

2. For Christ to reject one that thus comes to him, would be to frustrate all those great things which God brought to pass from the fall of man to the incarnation of Christ. It would also frustrate all that Christ did and suffered while on earth; yea, it would frustrate the incarnation itself. All the great things done were for that end, that those might be saved who should come to Christ. Therefore you may be sure Christ will not be backward in saving those who come to him, and trust in him: for he has no desire to frustrate himself in his own work. Neither will God the Father refuse you: for he has no desire to frustrate himself in all that he did for so many hundreds and thousands of years, to prepare the way for the salvation of sinners by Christ. Come, therefore, hearken to the sweet and earnest calls of Christ to your soul. Do as he invites and as he commands you, Matt. xi. 28—30. *Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

PERIOD III.

From Christ's Resurrection to the End of the World.

In discoursing on this subject, we have already shown how the work of redemption was carried on through the *two first* of the THREE PERIODS into which we divided the whole space of time from the fall to the end of the world. We are now come to the third and last period, beginning with Christ's resurrection; and would show, that the space of time from the end of Christ's humiliation to the end of the world is all taken up in bringing about the great effect or success of Christ's purchase.

SECT. I.

Scriptural Representations of this Period.

Not but that there were great effects and glorious success of Christ's purchase of redemption before, even from the beginning of the generations of men. But all that success which was before, was only preparatory, by way of anticipation, as

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some few fruits are gathered before the harvest. There was no more success before Christ came, than God saw needful to prepare the way for his coming. The proper time of the success or effect of Christ's redemption is after the purchase has been made, as the proper time for the world to enjoy the light of the sun is the day-time, after the sun is risen, though we may have some small matter of it reflected from the moon and planets before. And even the success of Christ's redemption while he himself was on earth, was very small in comparison of what it was after.

But, Christ having finished that greatest and most difficult of all works, now is come the time for obtaining the end, the glorious effect of it. Having gone through the whole course of his sufferings and humiliation, Christ is never to suffer any more. But now is the time for him to obtain the joy that was set before him. Having made his soul an offering for sin, now is the time for him to see his seed, to have a portion with the great, and to divide the spoil with the strong.

One design of Christ in what he did in his humiliation, was to lay a foundation for the overthrow of Satan's kingdom; and now is come the time to effect it, as Christ, a little before his crucifixion, said, John xii. 31. *Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out.* Another design was, to gather together in one all things in Christ. Now is come the time for this also: John xii. 32. *And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me;* which is agreeable to Jacob's prophecy of Christ, that *when Shiloh should come, to him should the gathering of the people be,* Gen. xlix. 10. Another design is the salvation of the elect. Now when his sufferings are finished, and his humiliation perfected, the time is come for that also: Heb. v. 8, 9. *Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered: and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.* Another design was, to accomplish by these things great glory to the persons of the Trinity. John xvii. 1. *Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.* Another design was the glory of the saints. John xvii. 11. *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.* And all the dispensations of God's providence henceforward, even to the final consummation of all things, are to give Christ his reward, and fulfil his end in what he did and suffered upon earth, and to fulfil the joy that was set before him.

Before I enter on the consideration of any particular things accomplished in this period, I would briefly observe how the times of this period are represented in scripture.

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I. The times of this period, for the most part, are in the Old Testament called *the latter days*. We often, in the prophets of the Old Testament, read of things that should come to pass *in the latter days*, and sometimes *in the last days*, evidently referring to gospel times. They are called *the latter days*, and *the last days:* because this is the last period of the series of God's providences on earth, the last period of the great work of redemption; which is as it were the sum of God's works of providence; the last dispensation of the covenant of grace on earth.

II. The whole time of this period is sometimes in scripture called *the end of the world*, 1 Cor. x. 11. *Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.* And the apostle, (Heb. ix. 26.) in this expression of *the end of the world*, means the whole of the gospel-day, from the birth of Christ to the day of judgment: *But now once in the end of the world, hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* This space of time may well be called *the end of the world;* for this whole time is taken up in bringing things to their great end and issue. Before, things were in a kind of preparatory state; but now they are in a finishing state. An end is now brought to the former carnal state of things, which by degrees vanishes, and a spiritual state begins to be established more and more. Particularly, an end is brought to the former state of the *church*, which may be called its worldly state, in which it was subject to carnal ordinances, and the rudiments of the world. Then an end is brought to the Jewish *commonwealth*, in the destruction of their city and country. After that, an end is brought to the old *Heathen empire* in Constantine's time. The next step is the finishing of *Satan's visible kingdom* in the world, upon the fall of Antichrist, and the calling of the Jews. And last will come the destruction of the outward frame of the world itself, at the conclusion of the day of judgment. Heaven and earth began to *shake*, in order to a dissolution, according to the prophecy of Haggai, before Christ came, that so only those things which cannot be shaken may remain, *i. e.* that those things which are to come to an end may terminate, and that only those things may remain which are to remain eternally.

In the first place, the carnal ordinances of the *Jewish worship* came to an end, in order to make way for the establishment of that spiritual worship, which is to endure all eternity; John iv. 21. *Jesus saith unto the woman, Believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.* Verse 23. *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*

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This is one instance of the temporary world coming to an end, and the eternal world beginning. And then the outward *temple* and the *city* Jerusalem came to an end, to give place to the setting up of the spiritual temple and city, which are to last for ever. Another instance of removing those things which are ready to vanish away, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain, is the bringing to an end the old Heathen empire, to make way for the empire of Christ, which shall last to all eternity. After that, upon the fall of Antichrist, an end is put to Satan's visible kingdom on earth, to establish Christ's kingdom, which is an eternal kingdom; as the prophet Daniel says, chap. vii. 27. *And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him;* which is another instance of the ending of the temporary world, and the beginning of the eternal one. And then, lastly, the very frame of this corruptible world shall come to an end, to make way for the church to dwell in another dwelling-place, which shall last to eternity.

Because the world is thus coming to an end by various steps and degrees, the apostle perhaps uses this expression, that (not the *end* but) the *ends* of the world are come on us; as though the world has several endings one after another.—The gospel dispensation is a finishing state; it is all spent in finishing things off which before had been preparing, or abolishing things which before had stood. It is all spent as it were in summing things up, and bringing them to their issues, and their proper fulfilment. Now all the old types are fulfilled, and the predictions of all the prophets from the beginning of the world shall be accomplished in this period.

III. That state of things which is attained in the events of this period is called *a new heaven and a new earth:* Isa. lxv. 17, 18. *For behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be you glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.* And chap. lxvi. 22. *For as the new heavens and the new earth which I make, shall remain before me; so shall your seed and your name remain.* See also chap. li. 16. As the former state of things, or the old world, by one step after another, is through this period coming to an end; so the new state of things, or the new world, which is a spiritual world, is beginning and setting up. In consequence of each of these finishings of the old state of things, there is the beginning of a new and eternal state. So that which accompanied the destruction of the literal Jerusalem, was an establishing of the spiritual. So with respect to the destruction of the old Heathen empire, and all

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the other endings of the old state of things; till at length the very outward frame of the world itself shall come to an end; and the church shall dwell in heaven, which will be a new habitation. Then shall the utmost be accomplished that is meant by the new heavens and the new earth. (See Rev. xxi. 1.)

The end of God's creating the world, was to prepare a kingdom for his Son, (for he is appointed heir of the world,) which should remain to all eternity. So far as the *kingdom of Christ is set up* in the world, *so far* is the world brought to its end, and the eternal state of things set up—*so far* are all the great changes and revolutions in the world brought to their everlasting issue, and all things come to their ultimate period—*so far* are the waters of the long channel of divine providence, which has so many branches, and so many windings, emptied into their proper ocean, which they have been seeking from the beginning of their course, and so are come to their rest. So far as Christ's kingdom is established in the world, *so far* are things wound up and settled in their everlasting state, and a period put to the course of things in this changeable world; *so far* are the first heavens and the first earth come to an end, and the new heavens and the new earth, the everlasting heavens and earth, established in their room.—This leads me to observe,

IV. That the state of things which is attained by the events of this period, is what is so often called *the kingdom of heaven*, or *the kingdom of God.* We very often read in the New Testament of the kingdom of heaven. John the Baptist preached, that the kingdom of heaven was at hand; and so did Christ and his disciples after him; referring to something that the Jews in those days expected, and called by that name. They seem to have taken their expectation and the name chiefly from the prophecy of Daniel in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Dan. ii. 44. *And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom;* together with chap. vii. 13, 14.

Now this *kingdom of heaven* is that evangelical state of things in the church, and in the world, wherein consists the success of Christ's redemption in this period. There had been often great kingdoms set up before; as the Babylonish, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman monarchies. But Christ came to set up the last, which is not an earthly kingdom, but an heavenly, John xviii. 36. *My kingdom is not of this world.* This is the kingdom of which Christ speaks, Luke xxii. 29. *My Father hath appointed to me a kingdom.* This kingdom began soon after Christ's resurrection, and is accomplished in *various steps* from that time to the end of the world. Sometimes by *the kingdom of heaven*, is meant not only that *spiritual* state of the church which began soon after Christ's resurrection; but

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also that *more perfect* state which shall obtain after the downfal of Antichrist; and sometimes that *glorious* and blessed state to which the church shall be received at the day of judgment. So 1 Cor. xv. 50. *This I say, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.*—Under this head I would observe several things particularly, for the clearer understanding of what the scripture says concerning this period.

1. The setting up of the kingdom of Christ is chiefly accomplished by four successive great events, each of which is in scripture called *Christ's coming in his kingdom.* The *first* is Christ's appearing in those wonderful dispensations of providence in the apostles' days, in setting up his kingdom, and destroying its enemies, which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem. This is called Christ's coming in his kingdom, Matt. xvi. 28. *Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.* (And Matt. xxiv.) The *second* is that which was accomplished in Constantine's time, in the destruction of the Heathen Roman empire. This is represented as Christ's coming, and is compared to his coming to judgment, (Rev. vi. at the latter end.) The *third* is that which is to be accomplished at the destruction of Antichrist. This also is represented as Christ's coming in his kingdom in the 7th chapter of Daniel, and in other places. The *fourth* and last is his coming to the last judgment, which is the event principally signified in scripture by *Christ's coming in his kingdom.*

2. Each of the three former of these is a lively image, or type, of the fourth and last, *viz.* Christ's coming to the final judgment, as the principal dispensations of providence before, were types of his first coming.——As Christ's last coming to judgment is accompanied with the resurrection of the dead, so is each of the three foregoing with a spiritual resurrection. That coming of Christ which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem, was preceded by a glorious *spiritual* resurrection of souls in the calling of the Gentiles through the preaching of the gospel. Christ's coming in Constantine's time, was accompanied with a glorious *spiritual* resurrection of the greater part of the known world, in a restoration of it to a visible church state, from a state of Heathenism. Christ's coming at the destruction of Antichrist, will be attended with a *spiritual* resurrection of the church after it had been long as it were dead, in the times of Antichrist. This is called the *first resurrection* in the 20th chapter of Revelation.

Again, as Christ in the last judgment will gloriously manifest himself coming in the glory of his Father, so in each of the three foregoing events Christ gloriously manifested himself in sending judgments upon his enemies, and in showing favour

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to his church. As the last coming of Christ will be attended with a literal gathering together of the elect from the four winds of heaven, so were each of the preceding attended with a spiritual gathering in of the elect. As this gathering together of the elect will be effected by God's angels with a great sound of a trumpet; (Matt. xxiv. 31.) so were each of the preceding spiritual ingatherings effected by the trumpet of the gospel, sounded by the ministers of Christ. As there shall precede the last appearance of Christ, a time of great degeneracy and wickedness, so this has been, or will be, the case with each of the other appearances. Before each of them is a time of a great opposition to the church; before the first, by the Jews: before the second, in Constantine's time, by the Heathen; before the third, by Antichrist; and before the last, by Gog and Magog, as described in the Revelation.

By each of these comings of Christ, God works a glorious *deliverance* for his church. The *first*, which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem, was attended with bringing the church into the glorious state of the gospel. The *second*, which was in Constantine's time, was accompanied with an advancement of the church into a state of liberty from persecution, the countenance of civil authority, and her triumph over Heathen persecutors. The *third*, which shall be at the downfal of Antichrist, will be accompanied with an advancement of the church into that state of the glorious prevalence and truth, liberty, peace, and joy, which we so often read of in the prophetical parts of scripture. The *last* will be attended with the advancement of the church to consummate glory in heaven.

Each of these comings of Christ is accompanied with a terrible *destruction* of the wicked, and the enemies of the church: the *first*, with the destruction of the persecuting Jews, which was amazingly terrible; the *second*, with dreadful judgments on the Heathen persecutors of the church; the *third*, with the awful destruction of Antichrist, the most cruel and bitter enemy that ever the church had; the *fourth*, with divine wrath and vengeance on all the ungodly.—Further, there is in *each* of these comings of Christ an ending of the old, and a beginning of new heavens and a new earth; or an end of a temporal state of things, and a beginning of an eternal state.

3. I would observe, that each of those four great dispensations which are represented as Christ's coming in his kingdom, are but so many steps and degrees of the accomplishment of that one event prophesied of, Dan. vii. 13, 14. *And I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an*

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everlasting dominion, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. This is what the Jews expected, and called "the coming of the kingdom of heaven;" and what John the Baptist and Christ had respect to, when they said, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." This great event is accomplished by several steps.

4. When Christ came with the preaching of the apostles, to set up his kingdom in the world, which dispensation ended with the destruction of Jerusalem, then it was accomplished in a *glorious* degree; when the Heathen empire was destroyed in Constantine's time, it was fulfilled in a *further* degree; when Antichrist shall be destroyed, it will be accomplished in a *yet higher* degree: but when the end of the world is come, then will it be accomplished in its *most perfect* degree of all. And because these four great events are but images one of another, and the three former but types of the last, and since they are all only several steps of the accomplishment of the same thing; hence we find them all from time to time prophesied of under one, as in the prophecies of Daniel, and in the 24th chapter of Matthew, where some things seem more applicable to one of them, and others to another.

Thus it appears, that as there are several steps of the accomplishment of the kingdom of Christ, so in each one of them the event is accomplished in a further degree than in the foregoing. That in the time of Constantine was a greater and further accomplishment of the kingdom of Christ, than that which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem; that which shall be at the fall of Antichrist, will be a further accomplishment of the same thing, than that which took place in the time of Constantine; and so on with regard to each: so that the kingdom of Christ is gradually prevailing and growing by these several great steps of its fulfilment, from the time of Christ's resurrection to the end of the world.

5. The great providences of God between these four events, are to make way for the kingdom and glory of Christ in the great event following. Those dispensations of providence towards the church and the world, before the destruction of the Heathen empire in the time of Constantine, seem all to have been to make way for the glory of Christ, and the happiness of the church in that event. And so the great providences after that, till the destruction of Antichrist, and the beginning of the glorious times of the church which follow, seem all calculated to prepare the way for the greater glory of Christ and his church in that event; and the following ones to the end of the world, seem to be for the greater manifestation of Christ's glory at the consummation of all things.—Thus I thought it needful to observe those things in general concerning this last period, before I take notice of *particular* providences by which the

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work of redemption is carried on through this period, in their order.

Before I proceed, I will briefly answer an INQUIRY, *viz.* Why the setting up of Christ's kingdom after his humiliation, should be so gradual, since God could easily have finished it at once?—Though it would be presumption in us to pretend to declare all the ends of God in this, yet doubtless much of his wisdom may be seen in it; and particularly in these two things.

1. In this way the glory of God's wisdom, is more visible to the observation of creatures. If it had been done at once, or in a very short time, there would not have been such opportunities for creatures to perceive and observe the particular steps of divine wisdom, as when the work is gradually accomplished, and one effect of his wisdom is held forth to observation after another. It is wisely determined of God, to accomplish his great design by a wonderful and long series of events, that the glory of his wisdom may be displayed in the whole series of events, that the glory of his perfection may be seen, in particular successive manifestations. If all that glory which appears in these events had been manifested at once, it would have been too much for us; it would have overpowered our sight and capacities.

2. Satan is more gloriously triumphed over.——God could easily, by an act of almighty power, at once have crushed Satan. But by giving him time to use his utmost subtilty to hinder the success of what Christ had done and suffered, he is not defeated merely by surprise, but has large opportunity to ply his utmost power and subtilty again and again, to strengthen his own interest all that he can by the work of many ages. Thus God destroys and confounds him, and sets up Christ's kingdom time after time, in spite of all his subtle machinations and great works, and by every step advances it still higher and higher, till at length it is fully set up, and Satan perfectly and eternally vanquished.—I now proceed to take notice of the particular events, whereby, from the end of Christ's humiliation to the end of the world, the success of Christ's purchase has been or shall be accomplished.

SECT. II.

How Christ was capacitated for effecting his purpose.

As the incarnation of Christ was necessary in order to his being in a near capacity for the *purchase* of redemption; so his resurrection and ascension were requisite in order to the *success* of his purchase.

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I. His *resurrection*. It was necessary in order to Christ's obtaining the end and effect of his purchase of redemption, that he should rise from the dead. For God the Father had committed the whole affair of redemption to his Son, that he should not only purchase it as priest, but actually bring it about as king; and that he should do this as God-man. God the Father would have nothing to do with fallen man in a way of mercy but by a mediator. But in order that Christ might accomplish the success of his own purchase as God-man, it was necessary that he should rise from the dead. Therefore Christ, after he had finished this purchase by death, rises from the dead, to fulfil the end of his purchase. This matter God the Father had committed unto him, that he might, as Lord of all, manage all to his own purposes: Rom. xiv. 9. *For to this end Christ both died and rose, and revived; that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.*

Indeed Christ's resurrection, (and so his ascension,) was part of the success of what Christ did and suffered in his humiliation. For though Christ did not properly purchase *redemption* for himself, yet he purchased *eternal life* and glory for himself, as a reward of what he did and suffered: Phil. ii. 8, 9. *He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him.* And it may be looked upon as part of the success of Christ's purchase, since he did not rise as a *private* person, but as the *head* of the elect church; so that they did, as it were, all rise with him. Christ was justified in his resurrection, *i. e.* God acquitted and discharged him hereby, as having done and suffered enough for the sins of all the elect: Rom. iv. 25. *Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.* And God put him in possession of eternal life, as the head of the church, as a sure earnest that they should follow. For when Christ rose from the dead, that was the beginning of eternal life in him. His life before his death was a mortal life, a temporal life; but after his resurrection it was an eternal life: Rom. vi. 9. *Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.* Rev. i. 18. *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen.*"——But he was put in possession of this eternal life, as the head of the body; so that the whole church, as it were, rises in him. And now he, who lately suffered so much, is to suffer no more for ever, but has entered into eternal glory.

This resurrection of Christ is the most *joyful* event that ever came to pass; because hereby Christ rested from the great and difficult work of purchasing redemption, and received God's testimony, that it was finished. The death of Christ was the greatest and most wonderful event that ever

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came to pass; but that has a great deal in it that is sorrowful. But by the resurrection of Christ, that sorrow is turned into joy. The head of the church, in that great event, enters on the possession of eternal life; and the whole church is, as it were, *begotten again to a lively hope*, 1 Pet. i. 3. Weeping had continued for a night, but now joy cometh in the morning. This is the day of his reigning, as the head of the church, and all the church reigns with him. This day was worthy to be commemorated with the greatest joy. Psal. cxviii. 24. *This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.* And therefore this, above all other days, is appointed to the end of the world, to be weekly sanctified, as a day of holy rest and joy, that the church therein may rest and rejoice with her head. And as the third chapter of Genesis is the most sorrowful chapter in the Bible, so those chapters in the evangelist, that give an account of the resurrection of Christ, may be looked upon as the most joyful. These give an account of the finishing of the purchase of redemption, and the beginning of the glory of the head of the church, as the greatest seal and earnest of the eternal glory of all the members.

It is further to be observed, that the day of the gospel most properly begins with the resurrection of Christ. Till Christ rose from the dead, the Old-Testament dispensation remained: but now it ceases, all being fulfilled that was shadowed forth in the typical ordinances of that dispensation. Here most properly is the end of the Old Testament night; and Christ rising from the grave with joy and glory, was like the sun rising after a long night of darkness, appearing in joyful light to enlighten the world. Now that joyful dispensation begins, that glorious dispensation, of which the prophets testified so much. Now the gospel-sun is risen in his glory, *and with healing in his wings*, that those who fear God's name, may *go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.*

II. Christ's *ascension* into heaven. In this I would include his sitting at the right hand of God. For Christ's ascension was nothing else, but ascending to God's right hand in glory. A deliverer of a people as their king, in order that he may be under the best capacity for it, is first installed in his throne. We are told, that Christ was exalted for this end, that he might accomplish the success of his redemption: Acts v. 31. *Him hath God exalted with his right hand, for to give repentance unto Israel, and the remission of sins.*

Christ's ascension into heaven was, as it were, his solemn coronation, when the Father set him upon the throne, and invested him with the glory of that kingdom which he had purchased for himself, that he might thereby obtain the success of his redemption in conquering all his enemies: Psal. cx. i.

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Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Christ entered into heaven, in order to obtain the success of his purchase, as the high priest of old, after he had offered sacrifice, entered into the holy of holies with the blood of the sacrifice, in order to obtain the success of the sacrifice which he had offered.—See Heb. ix. 12. He entered into heaven, there to make intercession for his people, to plead the sacrifice which he had made in order to the success of it, Heb. vii. 25. —And as he ascended into heaven, God the Father did in a visible manner set him on the throne as king of the universe. He then put the angels all under him, and subjected to him heaven and earth, that he might govern them for the good of the people for whom he died, Eph. i. 20—22. And as Christ rose from the dead, so he ascended into heaven, as the head of the body, and forerunner of all the church; and they, as it were, ascend with him; so that we are both raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ, Eph. ii. 6.

The day of Christ's ascension was doubtless a joyful, glorious day in heaven. And as heaven received Christ, God-man, as its king, so doubtless it received a great accession of glory and happiness. So that the times in both parts of the church, that part which is in heaven, and that which is on earth, are become more glorious since Christ's humiliation than before.—So much for those things whereby Christ was put into the best capacity for obtaining the success of redemption.

SECT. III.

Established Means of Success.

CONSIDER those dispensations of providence, by which the *means of this success* were established after Christ's resurrection.

I. The abolishing of the *Jewish dispensation.* This indeed was gradually done, but it began from the time of Christ's resurrection, in which the abolition of it is founded. For the *Jewish* dispensation was not fitted for the practice of the world in general, or for a church of God dwelling in all parts of the world: nor would it have been practicable by them. It would have been impossible for men living in all parts of the world to go to Jerusalem three times a year, as was prescribed in that constitution. When therefore God had a design of enlarging his church, as he did after Christ's resurrection, it was necessary that this dispensation should be abolished. If it had been continued, it would have been a great block and hindrance to the enlargement of the church.

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Besides, their ceremonial law, by reason of its burdensomeness, and great peculiarity of some of its rites, was a wall of partition between the Jews and Gentiles, and would have kept the Gentiles from complying with the true religion. This wall therefore was broken down to make way for the more extensive success of the gospel; as Eph. ii. 14, 15.

II. The next thing in order of time seems to be the appointment of the *Christian Sabbath*. For though this was gradually established in the Christian church, yet those things by which the revelation of God's mind and will was made, began on the day of Christ's resurrection, by his appearing then to his disciples, John xx. 19. And afterwards, his appearing was from time to time on that day rather than any other, John xx. 26. This appointment was confirmed by his sending down the Holy Spirit so remarkably on that day, Acts ii. 1; and afterwards by directing, that the public worship of Christians should be on that day, which may be concluded from Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. and Rev. i. 10. And so the day of the week on which Christ rose from the dead, that joyful day, is appointed to be the day of the church's holy rejoicing to the end of the world, and the day of their stated public worship. And this is a very great and principal means of the success which the gospel has had in the world.

III. The next thing was Christ's appointment of the *gospel ministry*, by commissioning and sending forth his apostles to teach and baptize all nations. Of these things we have an account in Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. *Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.* There were three things done by this one commission of Christ to his apostles, *viz.*

1. The appointment of the *office* of the gospel-ministry. —For this commission which Christ gives to his apostles, in the most essential parts of it, belongs to all ministers; and the apostles, by virtue of it, were ministers or elders of the church.

2. Something peculiar in this commission, *viz.* to go forth *from one nation to another*, preaching the gospel in all the world. The apostles had something above what belonged to their ordinary character as ministers; they had an extraordinary power of teaching and ruling, which extended to all the churches; and not only all the churches which then were, but all that should be to the end of the world by their ministry. And so the apostles were, in subordination to Christ, made foundations of the Christian church. See Eph. ii. 20. and Rev. xxi. 14.

3. Here is an appointment of Christian *baptism*. This

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ordinance indeed had a beginning before; John the Baptist and Christ baptized. But now especially by this institution is it established as an ordinance to be upheld in the Christian church to the end of the world.——The ordinance of the Lord's supper had been established before, just before Christ's crucifixion.

IV. The next thing to be observed, is the enduing the apostles, and others, with extraordinary and *miraculous gifts* of the Holy Ghost; such as the gift of tongues, the gift of healing, of prophecy, &c. The Spirit of God was poured out in great abundance in this respect; so that not only ministers, but a very great part of the Christians through the world were endued with them, both old and young; not only officers, and more honourable persons, but the meaner sort of people, servants and handmaids, agreeable to Joel's prophecy, Joel ii. 28, 29; of which prophecy the apostle Peter takes notice, that it is accomplished in this dispensation, Acts ii. 11.

How wonderful a dispensation was this! Under the Old Testament, but few had such honours put upon them by God. Moses indeed wished that all the Lord's people were prophets, Numb. xi. 29; whereas Joshua thought it much that Eldad and Medad prophesied. But now we find the wish of Moses fulfilled. And this continued in a very considerable degree to the end of the apostolic age, or the first hundred years after the birth of Christ; which is therefore called *the age of miracles.*

This was a great means of the success of the gospel, and of establishing the Christian church, not only in that age, but in all ages to the end of the world. For Christianity being established through so great a part of the known world by miracles, it was after that more easily continued by tradition; and by means of these extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, the apostles and others were enabled to write the New Testament, to be an infallible and perpetual rule of faith and manners to the church. And these miracles recorded in those writings are a standing proof of the truth of Christianity to all ages.

V. The next thing is the revealing of those glorious doctrines fully and plainly, which had under the Old Testament been obscurely revealed. The doctrine of Christ's satisfaction and righteousness, his ascension and glory, and the way of salvation, were, under the Old Testament, in a great measure hid under the vail of types and shadows, and more obscure revelations, as Moses put a vail on his face, to hide the shining of it; but now the vail of the temple is rent from the top to the bottom. Christ, the antetype of Moses, shines; his face is without a vail; 2 Cor. iii. 12, 13, & 18. Now these glorious mysteries, which were in a great measure kept secret from the foundation of the world, are clearly

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revealed. Eph. iii. 3—5. Rom. xvi. 25. *According to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest;* and Col. i. 26. *Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.*

Thus the Sun of righteousness, after it is risen, begins to shine forth clearly, and not by a dim reflection as before.—Christ, before his death, revealed many things more clearly than ever they had been in the Old Testament; but the great mysteries of Christ's redemption, reconciliation by his death, and justification by his righteousness, were not so plainly revealed before Christ's resurrection. Christ gave this reason for it, that he would not put new wine into old bottles; and it was gradually done even after his resurrection. In all likelihood, Christ much more clearly instructed them personally after his resurrection, and before his ascension; as we read that he continued with them forty days, speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom, Acts i. 3; and that *he opened their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures,* Luke xxiv. 45. But the clear revelation of these things was principally after the pouring out of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, agreeable to Christ's promise, John xvi. 12, 13. *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth.* This clear revelation of the mysteries of the gospel, as they are delivered, we have chiefly through the hands of the apostle Paul, by whose writings a child may come to know more of the doctrines of the gospel, in many respects, than the greatest prophets knew under the darkness of the Old Testament.

Thus we see how the light of the gospel, which began to dawn immediately after the fall, and gradually increased through all the ages of the Old Testament, is now come to the light of perfect day, as the brightness of the sun shining forth in his unvailed glory.

VI. The next thing that I would observe, is the appointment of the office of deacons in the Christian church, which we have an account of in the 6th chapter of the Acts, to take care for the outward supply of the members of Christ's church, and the exercise of that great Christian virtue, charity.

VII. The calling, qualifying, and sending the apostle Paul. This was begun in his conversion as he was going to Damascus, and was one of the greatest means of the success of Christ's redemption that followed: for this success was more by the labours, preaching, and writings of this apostle, than all the other apostles put together. For, as he says, 1 Cor. xv. 10, he *laboured more abundantly than they all.* As he was the apostle of the Gentiles, so it was mainly by his

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ministry that the Gentiles were called, and the gospel spread through the world. Our nation, and the other nations of Europe, have the gospel among them chiefly through his means; and he was more employed by the Holy Ghost in revealing the glorious doctrines of the gospel by his writings, for the use of the church in all ages, than all the other apostles taken together.

VIII. The next thing I would observe, is the institution of ecclesiastical councils, for deciding controversies, and ordering the affairs of the church of Christ, of which we have an account in the 15th chapter of Acts.

IX. The last thing I shall mention under this head, is the committing the New Testament to writing. This was all written after the resurrection of Christ by the apostles themselves, except the gospels of Mark and Luke, and the book of the Acts. He that wrote the gospel of Mark, is supposed to be the son of Mary, in whose house they were praying for Peter, when he, brought out of prison by the angel, came and knocked at the door; of which we read, Acts xii. 12. *And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together, praying.* He was the companion of the apostles Barnabas and Paul: Acts xv. 37. *And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.* —He was Barnabas's sister's son, and seems sometime to have been a companion of the apostle Paul: Col. iv. 10. *Aristarchus, my fellow-prisoner, saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas; touching whom ye received commandment: if he come unto you, receive him.* The apostles seem to have made great account of him, as appears by those places, and also by Acts xii. 25. *And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark;* and Acts xiii. 5. *And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; and they had also John to their minister;* and, 2 Tim. iv. 11. *Only Luke is with me: take Mark and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry.*

He who wrote the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts was a great companion of the apostle Paul. Beside the last-mentioned place, he speaks of himself as accompanying Paul in his travels, and therefore speaks in the first person plural; We went to such a place; we set sail, &c. He was greatly beloved by the apostle Paul; he is that beloved physician spoken of, Col. iv. 14. The apostle ranks Mark and Luke among his fellow-labourers, Philemon 24. *Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow-labourers.*

The books of the New Testament are either historical, doctrinal, or prophetical. The *historical* books are the writings

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of the four evangelists, giving us the history of Christ, his purchase of redemption, his resurrection and ascension; and the Acts of the Apostles, giving an account of the great things by which the Christian church was first established and propagated. The *doctrinal* books are the epistles; most of which we have from the great apostle Paul. And we have one *prophetical* book, which takes place after the end of the history of the whole Bible, and gives an account of the great events which were to come to pass, by which the work of redemption was to be carried on to the end of the world.

All these books are supposed to have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem, excepting those which were written by the apostle John, who lived the longest of all the apostles, and who wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem, as is supposed. To this beloved disciple it was that Christ revealed those wonderful things which were to come to pass in his church to the end of time; and he was the person who put the finishing hand to the canon of scripture, and sealed the whole of it. So that now the canon of scripture, that great and standing written rule, which was begun about Moses' time, is completed and settled, and a curse denounced against him that adds any thing to it, or diminishes any thing from it. And so all the stated means of grace were finished in the apostolical age, or before the death of the apostle John, and are to remain unaltered to the day of judgment. Thus far we have considered those things by which the means of grace were given and established in the Christian church.

SECT. IV.

How the Success was carried on.

From Christ's resurrection till the fall of Antichrist, is the appointed day of Zion's troubles. During this space of time, some part or other of the church is under persecution; and great part of the time, the whole church, or at least the generality of God's people, have been persecuted. For the first three hundred years after Christ, the church was for the most part in a state of great affliction, the object of reproach and persecution; first by the Jews, and then by the Heathen. —After this, from the beginning of Constantine's time, the church had rest and prosperity for a little while; which is represented in Rev. vii. at the beginning, by the angel's holding the four winds for a little while. But presently after, the church again suffered persecution from the Arians. After that, Antichrist rose, the church was driven away into the wilderness, was kept down in obscurity, contempt, and suf-

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fering, for a long time before the reformation by Luther and others. And since the Reformation, the church's persecutions have been beyond all that ever were before. And though some parts of God's church sometimes have had rest, yet, to this day, for the most part, the true church is very much kept under by its enemies, and some parts of it under grievous persecution. And so we may expect it will continue till the fall of Antichrist. Then will come the appointed day of the church's prosperity on earth, the set time in which God will favour Zion, the time when the saints shall not be kept under by wicked men, but wherein they shall reign, as it is said, Rev. v. 10. *And the kingdom shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High*, Dan. vii. 27.

The suffering state of the church is in scripture represented as a state of the church's travail, (John xvi. 20, 21. and Rev. xii. 1, 2.) striving to bring forth that glory and prosperity which shall be after the fall of Antichrist, and then shall she bring forth her child. This is a long time of the church's trouble and affliction, though it be but for a little season, in comparison of the eternal prosperity of the church. Hence under the long continuance of this affliction, she cries out, (Rev. vi. 10.) *How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* And we are told, that *white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.* So Dan. xii. 6. *How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?*

It is to be observed, that during the time of these sufferings of the church, the main instrument of their sufferings has been the Roman government. Rome, therefore, in the New Testament, is called *Babylon;* because, as of old, the troubles of the city of Jerusalem were mainly from that adverse city, Babylon, so the troubles of the Christian church, the spiritual Jerusalem, during the long time of its tribulation, is mainly from Rome. Before the time of Constantine, the troubles of the Christian church were from Heathen Rome: since that time, its troubles have been mainly from Antichristian Rome. And as of old, the captivity of the Jews ceased on the destruction of Babylon, so the time of the trouble of the Christian church will cease with the destruction of the church of Rome, that spiritual Babylon.

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PART I.

The Success of Redemption from the Resurrection of Christ to the Destruction of Jerusalem.

I WOULD now show, how the success of Christ's purchase of redemption was carried on from Christ's resurrection to the destruction of Jerusalem. In speaking of this I would,—1. Take notice of the success itself; and, 2. The opposition made against it by its enemies; and, 3. The terrible judgments of God on those enemies.

I. I would observe the *success itself*. Soon after Christ had entered into the holy of holies with his own blood, there began a glorious success of what he had done and suffered.—Having undermined the foundation of Satan's kingdom, it began to fall apace. Swiftly did it hasten to ruin, which might well be compared to Satan's falling like lightning from heaven. Satan before had exalted his throne very high in this world, even to the very stars of heaven, reigning with great glory in his Heathen Roman empire; but never before had he such a downfal as he had soon after Christ's ascension. He had, we may suppose, been very lately triumphing in a supposed victory, having brought about the death of Christ, which he doubtless gloried in as the greatest feat that ever he did; and probably imagined he had totally defeated God's design by him. But he was quickly made sensible, that he had only been ruining his own kingdom, when he saw it tumbling so fast so soon after, as a consequence of the death of Christ. For Christ, having ascended, and received the Holy Spirit, poured it forth abundantly for the conversion of thousands and millions of souls.

Never had Christ's kingdom been so set up in the world. There probably were more souls converted in the age of the apostles, than had been before from the beginning of the world till that time. Thus God so soon begins gloriously to accomplish his promise to his Son, wherein he had promised, That he should see his seed, and that the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand, if he would make his soul an offering for sin. And,

1. Here is to be observed the success which the gospel had among the *Jews;* for God first began with them. He being about to reject the main body of that people, first calls in his elect from among them. It was so in former great and dreadful judgments of God on that nation: the bulk of them were destroyed, and only a remnant saved or reformed. The

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bulk of the ten tribes was rejected, when they left the true worship of God under Jeroboam, and afterwards more fully in Ahab's time; but yet there was a remnant of them reserved. Many left their possessions in these tribes, and settled in the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. And afterwards there were seven thousand in Ahab's time, who had not bowed the knee to Baal. From the captivity into Babylon, only a remnant of them ever returned to their own land. So now the greater part of the people were rejected entirely, but some few were saved. And therefore the Holy Ghost compares this reservation of a number that were converted by the preaching of the apostles, to those former remnants: Rom. ix. 27. *Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.*—See Isa. x. 22.

The glorious success of the gospel among the Jews after Christ's ascension, began by the pouring out of the Spirit upon the day of Pentecost. (Acts ii.) So wonderful was this effusion, and so remarkable and swift the effect of it, that we read of three thousand who were converted to the Christian faith in one day, Acts ii. 41; and probably the greater part of these were savingly converted. And after this, we read of God's adding to the church daily such as should be saved, (ver. 47.) Soon after, we read, that the number of them were about five thousand. Thus were not only a multitude converted, but the church was then eminent in piety, as appears by Acts ii. 46, 47. iv. 32.

Thus the Christian church was first formed from the nation of Israel; and therefore, when the Gentiles were called, they were *added* to the Christian church of Israel, as the proselytes of old were to the Mosaic church of Israel. They were only *grafted* on the stock of Abraham, and were not a distinct tree; for they were all still the seed of Abraham and Israel; as Ruth the Moabitess, and Uriah the Hittite, and other proselytes of old, were the same people, and ranked as the seed of Israel.

The Christian church began at Jerusalem, and from thence was propagated to all nations; so that this church of Jerusalem was the mother of all other churches in the world; agreeable to the prophecy, Isa. ii. 3, 4. *Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem: and he shall judge among the nations, and rebuke many people.* So that the whole church of God is still his spiritual Jerusalem.

After this, we read of many thousands of Jews in Jerusalem, that believed, Acts xxi. 20. And we read of multitudes of Jews who were converted in other cities of Judea; and in other parts of the world. For it was the manner of the apostles to go first into the synagogues of the Jews, and

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preach the gospel to them, and many in one place and another believed; as in Damascus, Antioch, and many other places.

In this pouring out of the Spirit, at the Pentecost, began that first great dispensation which is called *Christ's coming in his kingdom.* Christ's coming thus in a spiritual manner for the glorious erection of his kingdom in the world, is represented as his coming down from heaven, whither he had ascended, John xiv. 18. *I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you.* And verse 28. *Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you.* And thus the apostles began to see the kingdom of heaven come with power, as he promised them, Mark ix. 1.

2. After the success of the gospel had been so gloriously begun among the Jews, the Spirit of God was next wonderfully poured out on the *Samaritans*, who were the posterity of those whom the king of Assyria removed from different parts of his dominions, and settled in the land which had been inhabited by the ten tribes, whom he carried captive. These had received the five books of Moses, and practised most of the Mosaic rites, and so were a sort of *mongrel Jews.* We do not find them reckoned as Gentiles in the New Testament: for the calling of the Gentiles is spoken of as a new thing after this, beginning with the conversion of Cornelius. But yet it was an instance of making those a people who were no people; for they had corrupted the religion of Moses, and did not go up to Jerusalem to worship. They had another temple of their own in Mount Gerizzim; which is the mountain of which the woman of Samaria speaks, when she says, *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain.* Christ there does not approve of their separation from the Jews; but says, that they worshipped they knew not what, and that salvation is of the Jews. But now salvation is brought from the Jews to them by the preaching of Philip, (excepting that before Christ had some success among them,) with whose preaching there was a glorious pouring out of the Spirit of God in the city of Samaria; where we are told, that *the people believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of Christ, and were baptized, both men and women; and that there was great joy in that city*, Acts viii. 8—12.

Thus Christ had a glorious harvest in Samaria; according to what he said to his disciples at Jacob's well, three or four years before, on occasion of the people of Samaria appearing at a distance in the fields coming to the place where he was. John iv, 35, 36. The disposition which the people of Samaria showed towards Christ and his gospel, showed that they were ripe for the harvest; and now the harvest is come by Philip's preaching. There used to be a most bitter enmity between the Jews and Samaritans; but now, by their conversion, the

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Christian Jews and Samaritans are all happily united; for in Christ Jesus is neither Jew nor Samaritan, but Christ is all in all. This was a glorious instance of the wolf dwelling with the lamb, and the leopard lying down with the kid.

3. The next thing to be observed is the calling the Gentiles. This was a great and glorious dispensation, much spoken of in the Old Testament, and by the apostles, as a most glorious event. This was begun in the conversion of Cornelius and his family, greatly to the admiration of Peter, who was used as the instrument of it, and of those who were with him, Acts x. and xi. The next instance was the conversion of great numbers of Gentiles in Cyprus, Cyrene, and Antioch, by the disciples who were scattered abroad by the persecution which arose about Stephen, Acts xi. 19, 20, 21. And presently, upon this, the disciples began to be called Christians first at Antioch, (verse 26.)

After this vast multitudes of Gentiles were converted in different parts of the world, chiefly by the ministry of the apostle Paul. Multitudes flocked into the church of Christ in a great number of cities where the apostle came. So the number of Gentile members of the Christian church, soon far exceeded that of its Jewish members; yea, in less than ten years' time after Paul was sent forth from Antioch to preach to the Gentiles, it was said of him and his companions, that they had turned the world upside down: Acts xvii. 6. *These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.* But the most remarkable instance seems to be that in *Ephesus*, which was a very great city, Acts xix. There was also a very extraordinary ingathering of souls at *Corinth*, one of the greatest cities in all Greece. And after this many were converted in *Rome*, the chief city of all the world; and the gospel was propagated into all parts of the Roman empire. Thus the gospel-sun which had lately risen on the Jews, now rose upon, and began to enlighten the Heathen world, after they had continued in gross Heathenish darkness for so many ages.

This was a great and new thing, such as never had been before. All nations but the Jews, and a few who had occasionally joined them, had been rejected from about the time of Moses. The Gentile world had been covered with the thick darkness of idolatry; but now, at the joyful sound of the gospel, they began in all parts to forsake their idols, and to cast them to the moles and to the bats. They now learned to worship the true God, and to trust in his Son Jesus Christ. God owned them for his people; and those who had so long been afar off, were made nigh by the blood of Christ. Men, from being heathenish and brutish, became the children of God; were called out of Satan's kingdom of darkness, and

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brought into God's marvellous light. In almost all countries throughout the known world there were Christian assemblies, and joyful praises were sung to the true God, and Jesus Christ the glorious Redeemer. Now that great building which God began soon after the fall of man, rises gloriously, in a new manner; now Daniel's prophecies concerning the last kingdom, which should succeed the four heathenish monarchies, begins to be fulfilled; now the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, began to smite the image on its feet, and to break it in pieces, and to make great advances towards filling the earth; and now God gathers together his elect from the four winds of heaven, by the preaching of the apostles and other ministers, (the angels of the Christian church sent forth with the great sound of the gospel-trumpet,) before the destruction of Jerusalem, agreeable to what Christ foretold, Matt. xxiv. 31.

II. I would proceed now, in the second place, to take notice of the *opposition* which was made to this success of Christ's purchase by the enemies of it.——Satan, who lately was so ready to triumph and exult, as though he had gained the victory in putting Christ to death, now finding himself fallen into the pit which he had digged, and finding his kingdom falling so fast, and seeing Christ's kingdom make such amazing progress, was filled with the greatest confusion and astonishment; and hell seemed to be effectually alarmed to make the most violent opposition against it. And, first, the devil stirred up the Jews, who had before crucified Christ, to persecute the church; for it is observable, that the persecution which the church suffered during this period, was mostly from the Jews. Thus we read in the Acts, when the Holy Ghost was poured out at Pentecost, how the Jews mocked, and said, *These men are full of new wine;* and how the scribes and Pharisees, and the captain of the temple, were alarmed, and bestirred themselves to oppose and persecute the apostles. They first apprehended and threatened them, and afterwards imprisoned and beat them; and breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, they stoned Stephen in a tumultuous rage; and were not content to persecute those that they could find in Judea, but sent abroad to Damascus and other places, to persecute all that they could find every where. Herod, who was chief among them, stretched forth his hands to vex the church, and killed James with the sword, and proceeded to take Peter also, and cast him into prison.

So, in other countries we find, that almost wherever the apostles came, the Jews opposed the gospel in a most malignant manner, contradicting and blaspheming! How many things did the blessed apostle Paul suffer at their hands! How violent and bloodthirsty did they shew themselves towards

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him, when he came to bring alms to his nation! In this persecution and cruelty was fulfilled that saying of Christ, Matt. xxiii. 34. *Behold, I send you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city.*

III. I proceed to take notice of the *judgments* which were executed on those enemies of Christ, the persecuting Jews.

1. The bulk of the people were given up to judicial blindness of mind and hardness of heart. Christ denounced such a woe upon them in the days of his flesh; Matt. xiii. 14, 15.——This curse was also denounced on them by the apostle Paul, Acts xxviii. 25, 26, 27; and under this curse, this judicial blindness and hardness, they remain to this very day, having been subject to it for about seventeen hundred years, being the most awful instance of such a judgment, and monuments of God's terrible vengeance, of any people. That they should continue from generation to generation so obstinately to reject Christ, so that it is a very rare thing that any one of them is converted to the Christian faith—though their own scriptures of the Old Testament, which they acknowledge, are so full of plain testimonies against them—is a remarkable evidence of their being dreadfully left of God.

2. They were rejected from being any longer God's visible people. They were broken off from the stock of Abraham, and since that have no more been reputed his seed, than the Ishmaelites or Edomites, who are as much his natural seed as they. The greater part of the two tribes were now cast off, as the ten tribes had been before, and another people were taken in their room, agreeable to the predictions of their own prophets, Deut. xxxii. 21. *They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities; and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation;* and Isaiah lxv. i. *I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not.* ——They were visibly rejected by God's directing his apostles to turn away from them, and let them alone; Acts xiii. 46, 47. *Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles; for so hath the Lord commanded us.* And so Acts xviii. 6. and xxviii. 28.

Thus far we have the scripture history to guide us: henceforward we shall have the guidance only of scripture prophecy and human histories.

3. The third and last judgment of God on those enemies of the success of the gospel which I shall mention is the

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terrible destruction of their city and country by the Romans. They had great warnings and many means used with them before this destruction. First, John the Baptist warned them, and told them, that the axe was laid at the root of the tree; and that every tree which should not bring forth good fruit, should be hewn down, and cast into the fire. Then Christ warned them very particularly, and told them of their approaching destruction, at the thoughts of which he wept over them. And then the apostles, after Christ's ascension, abundantly warned them. But they proved obstinate, and went on in their opposition to Christ and his church, and in their bitter persecuting practices. Their so malignantly persecuting the apostle Paul, of which we have an account towards the end of the Acts of the Apostles, is supposed to have been not more than seven or eight years before their destruction.

After this, God was pleased to give them one more very remarkable warning by the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, written, it is supposed, about four years before their destruction; wherein the plainest and clearest arguments are set before them from their own law, and from their prophets, for whom they professed such a regard, to prove that Christ Jesus must be the Son of God, that all their law typified him, and that the Jewish dispensation must needs have ceased. For though the epistle was more immediately directed to the Christian Hebrews, yet the matter of the epistle plainly shows that the apostle intended it for the use and conviction of the unbelieving Jews. And in this epistle he mentions particularly the approaching destruction, chap. x. 25. *So much the more, as ye see the day approaching;* and in ver. 27, he speaks of the approaching judgment and *fiery indignation which should devour the adversaries.*

But the generality of them, refusing to receive conviction, God soon destroyed with such terrible circumstances, as the destruction of no country or city since the foundation of the world can parallel; agreeable to what Christ foretold, Matt. xxiv. 21. *For then shall be tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.* The first destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians was very terrible, as it is in a most affecting manner described by the prophet Jeremiah, in his Lamentations; but that was nothing to the dreadful misery and wrath which they suffered in this destruction. God, as Christ foretold, brought on them all the righteous blood that had been shed from the foundation of the world. Thus the enemies of Christ are made his footstool after his ascension, agreeable to God's promise in Psal. cx.; and he rules them with a rod of iron. The briars and

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thorns set themselves against him in battle: but he went through them; he burned them together.

This destruction of Jerusalem was in all respects agreeable to what Christ had foretold of it, Matt. xxiv.; as appears by the account which Josephus gives of it, who was then present, who had a share in the calamity, and who wrote the history of their destruction. Many circumstances resembled the destruction of the wicked at the day of judgment; by his account, it was accompanied with many fearful sights in the heavens, and with a separation of the righteous from the wicked. Their city and temple were burnt, and razed to the ground; and the ground on which the city stood was ploughed, so that one stone was not left upon another, Matt. xxiv. 2.

The people had ceased for the most part to be an independent government after the Babylonish captivity; but the sceptre entirely departed from Judah on the death of Archelaus, when Judea was made a Roman province. After this, they were cast off from being the people of God; but now their very city and land are utterly destroyed, and they carried away from it; and so have continued in their dispersions through the world for now above sixteen hundred years.

Thus there was a final end put to the Old-Testament world: all was finished with a kind of day of judgment, in which the people of God were saved, and his enemies terribly destroyed.—Thus does he who was so lately mocked, despised, and spit upon by these Jews, and whose followers they so malignantly persecuted, appear gloriously exalted over his enemies.

PART II.

The Success of Redemption from the Destruction of Jerusalem, to the Time of Constantine.

Jerusalem was destroyed about the year of our Lord sixty-eight, and so before that generation passed away which was contemporary with Christ. The destruction of the Heathen empire under Constantine, was about two hundred and sixty years after this. In showing how the success of the gospel was carried on through this time, I would,—1. Take notice of the opposition made against it by the Roman empire.—2. How the work of the gospel went on notwithstanding all that oppo-

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sition.—3. The peculiar circumstances of tribulation and distress that the church was in just before their deliverance by Constantine; and, 4. The great revolution in Constantine's time.

I. I would briefly show what *opposition* was made against the gospel, and the kingdom of Christ, by the Roman empire. This opposition was mainly after the destruction of Jerusalem, though it began before; but that which was before the destruction of Jerusalem, was mainly by the Jews. When Jerusalem was destroyed, the Jews were much incapacitated for troubling the church; therefore the devil turns his hand elsewhere, and uses other instruments. The opposition which was made in the Roman empire against the kingdom of Christ, was chiefly of two kinds.

1. They employed all their learning, philosophy, and wit, in opposing it. Christ came into the world in an age wherein learning and philosophy were at their height in the Roman empire. The gospel, which held forth a crucified Saviour, was not at all agreeable to the notions of the philosophers.—The Christian scheme of trusting in such a crucified Redeemer, appeared foolish and ridiculous to them. Greece was a country the most famous for learning of any in the Roman empire: but the apostle observes, that the doctrine of Christ crucified appeared foolishness to the Greeks, 1 Cor. i. 23; and therefore the wise men and philosophers opposed the gospel with all the wit they had. We have a specimen of their manner of opposing, in their treatment of the apostle Paul at Athens, which was, and had been for many ages, the chief seat of philosophers in all the whole world. We read in Acts xvii. 18, that the philosophers of the Epicureans and Stoics encountered him saying, *What will this babbler say? He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods.* Thus they were wont to deride and ridicule Christianity; and, after the destruction of Jerusalem, several philosophers published books against it. The chief of these were Celsus and Porphyry, who wrote with a great deal of virulence and contempt, much after the manner of the Deists of the present age. As great enemies and despisers as they were of the Christian religion, they never denied the facts recorded of Christ and his apostles in the New Testament, particularly the miracles which they wrought, but allowed them. They lived too near the times of these miracles to deny them; for they were so publicly done, and so lately, that neither Jews nor Heathens in those days appeared to deny them; but they ascribed them to the power of magic.

2. The authority of the Roman empire employed all their strength, time after time, to persecute, and if possible to root out Christianity. This they did in ten general successive persecutions. We have heretofore observed that Christ came

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into the world when the strength of Heathen dominion and authority was the greatest under the Roman monarchy. All the strength of this monarchy was employed for a long time to oppose and persecute the Christian church, and if possible to destroy it, in ten successive attempts, which are called *the ten Heathen persecutions.*

The *first* of these, which was the persecution under Nero, was a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, in which the apostle Peter was crucified, and the apostle Paul beheaded, soon after he wrote his second epistle to Timothy. When he wrote that epistle, he was a prisoner at Rome under Nero, and says, chap. iv. 6, 7, *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.* There were many thousands of other Christians slain in that persecution.—The other nine persecutions were all after the destruction of Jerusalem. Some of these were very terrible indeed, and far exceeded the first persecution under Nero. One Emperor after another set himself with the utmost rage to root out the Christian church from the earth, that there should not be so much as the name of Christian left in the world. Thousands, yea millions were put to cruel deaths in them; for they spared neither sex nor age.

In the *second* general persecution, (under Domitian,) that which was next after the destruction of Jerusalem, the apostle John was banished to the isle of Patmos, where he had those visions which he has recorded in the Revelation. Under that persecution it was reckoned, that about forty thousand suffered martyrdom; which yet was nothing to what were put to death under some succeeding persecutions. Ten thousand suffered that one kind of cruel death, crucifixion, in the *third* persecution under the Emperor Adrian. Under the *fourth* persecution, which began about the year of Christ one hundred and sixty-two, many suffered martyrdom in England, the land of our forefathers, where Christianity had been planted, it is supposed, in the days of the apostles. And in the *later* persecutions, the Roman emperors being vexed at the frustration of their predecessors, who were not able to extirpate Christianity, or hinder its progress, were enraged to be the more violent in their attempts.

Thus a great part of the first three hundred years after Christ was spent in violent and cruel persecutions of the church by the Roman powers. Satan was very unwilling to quit his hold of so great and distinguished a part of the world, as the countries contained in the Roman empire, of which he had had the quiet possession for so many ages: and therefore, when he saw it going so fast out of his hands, he bestirred himself to his utmost. All hell was raised to oppose it with its utmost power.

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Satan thus exerting himself by the power of the Heathen Roman empire, is called *the great red dragon*, having seven heads and ten horns, fighting against the woman clothed with the sun. (Rev. xii.) And this terrible conflict between the church of Christ, and the powers of the Heathen empire before Constantine, is represented (verse 7) by the war between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels: *And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought, and the dragon fought and his angels.*

II. I would take notice what success the gospel had in the world before the time of Constantine, notwithstanding all this opposition.——Though the learning and power of the Roman empire were so great, and both were employed to the utmost against Christianity; yet all was in vain. They could neither root it out, nor stop its progress. In spite of all, the kingdom of Christ wonderfully prevailed, and Satan's Heathen kingdom mouldered and consumed away before it, agreeable to the text, "The moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool." And it was very observable that for the most part the more they persecuted the church, the more it increased; insomuch that it became a common saying, The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.—Herein the church of Christ proved to be like a palm-tree; of which it is remarked, that the greater weight is hung to its branches, the more it grows and flourishes. On this account probably the church is compared to a palm-tree, Cant. vii. 7. *This thy stature is like to a palm-tree.* JUSTIN MARTYR, an eminent father in the Christian church, says, that in his days there was no part of mankind, whether Greeks or barbarians, or by what name soever they were called, even the most rude and unpolished nations, where prayers and thanksgivings were not made to the great creator of the world, through the name of the crucified Jesus. TERTULLIAN, another eminent father in the Christian church, who lived in the beginning of the following age, testifies, that in his day the Christian religion had extended itself to the utmost bounds of the then known world, in which he reckons Britain; and thence demonstrates, that the kingdom of Christ was then more extensive than any of the four great monarchies. He moreover says, that though the Christians were as strangers of no long standing, yet they had filled all places of the Roman dominions, their cities, islands, castles, corporations, councils, armies, tribes, the palace, senate, and courts of judicature; only they had left to the Heathen their temples. He adds, that if they should all agree to retire out of the Roman empire, the world would be amazed at the solitude and desolation that would ensue upon it, there would be so few left; and that the Christians were enough to be able easily to defend themselves, if they were

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disposed to rise up in arms against the Heathen magistrates.—And Pliny, a Heathen who lived in those days, says, That multitudes of each sex, of every age and quality, were become Christians. This superstition, says he, having infected and over-run not the city only, but towns and countries, the temples and sacrifices are generally desolate and forsaken.

And it was remarked by both Heathen and Christian writers in those days, that the famous Heathen oracles in their temples—where princes and others for many past ages had been wont to inquire and receive answers with an audible voice from their gods, which were indeed answers from the devil, were now struck dumb, and gave no more answers: and particularly the oracle at Delphos, the most famous in the whole world, which both Greeks and Romans used to consult, began to cease to give any answers, even from the birth of Christ. The false deity who was worshipped, and who used to give answers from his oracle in that temple, being once inquired of, why he did not now give answers as he was wont to do? made this reply, (as several Heathen historians who lived about those times relate,) There is a Hebrew boy, who is king of the gods, who has commanded me to leave this house, and begone to hell, and therefore you are to expect no more answers.—And many Heathen writers, who lived about that time, speak much of the oracles being silenced, at which they wondered, not knowing what the cause should be. Plutarch wrote a particular treatise about it, which is still extant. And Porphyry, who opposed the Christian religion, has these words: "It is no wonder, if the city for these so many years has been over-run with sickness; Esculapius, and the rest of the gods, having withdrawn their converse with men: for since Jesus began to be worshipped, no man has received any public help or benefit by the gods." Thus did the kingdom of Christ prevail against the kingdom of Satan.

III. I now proceed to take notice of the peculiar circumstances of tribulation and distress just before Constantine the Great came to the throne. This distress they suffered under the *tenth* Heathen persecution, which, as it was the last, so it was by far the heaviest and most severe. The church before this, after the ceasing of the *ninth* persecution, had enjoyed a time of quietness for about forty years together; but, abusing their liberty, they began to grow cold and lifeless in religion, and contentions prevailed among them; by which they offended God to suffer this dreadful trial to come upon them. And Satan having lost ground so much, notwithstanding all his attempts, now seemed to bestir himself with more than ordinary rage. Those who were then in authority set themselves with the utmost violence to root out Christianity, by burning all Bibles, and destroying all Christians; and there-

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fore they did not stand to try or convict them in a formal process, but fell upon them wherever they could. Sometimes they set fire to houses where multitudes of them were assembled, burning them all together; at other times they slaughtered such multitudes that their persecutors were quite spent with the labour of killing and tormenting them; and in some populous places, so many were slain together, that the blood ran like torrents. It is related, that seventeen thousand martyrs were slain in one month's time; and that during the continuance of this persecution, in the province of Egypt alone, no less than one hundred and forty-four thousand Christians died by the violence of their persecutors, besides seven hundred thousand that died through the fatigues of banishment, or the public works to which they were condemned.

This persecution lasted for ten years together; and as it exceeded all foregoing persecutions in the number of martyrs, so it exceeded them in the variety and multitude of inventions of torture and cruelty. Some authors who lived at that time, say, they were innumerable, and exceed all account and expression. This persecution in particular was very severe in England; and is that which was foretold in Rev. vi. 9, 10. *And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* And at the end of the ten years, during which this persecution continued, the Heathen persecutors thought they had finished their work, and boasted that they had utterly destroyed the name and superstition of the Christians, and had restored and propagated the worship of the gods.

Thus it was the darkest time with the Christian church, just before the break of day. They were brought to the greatest extremity before God appeared for their glorious deliverance, as the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt was the most severe and cruel just before their deliverance by the hand of Moses. Their enemies thought they had swallowed them up, and sealed their destruction, as Pharaoh and his host thought when they had hemmed in the children of Israel at the Red Sea.

IV. I come now, in the fourth place, to the great revolution by Constantine, which was in many respects like Christ's appearing in the clouds of heaven to save his people, and judge the world. The people of Rome being weary of the government of those tyrants to whom they had lately been subject, sent to Constantine, who was then in the city of York in England, to come and take the throne. He was encouraged, it is said, by a vision of a pillar of light in the heavens, in the

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form of a cross, in the sight of his whole army, with this inscription, εν τουτω νικα, *in this overcome;* and the night following, by Christ's appearing to him in a dream with the same cross in his hand, who directed him to make a cross like that to be his royal standard, that his army might fight under that banner, and assured him that he should overcome. Accordingly he overcame his enemies, took possession of the imperial throne, embraced the Christian religion, and was the first Christian emperor that ever reigned. He came to the throne about three hundred and twenty years after Christ. There are several things which I would take notice of which attended, or immediately followed, Constantine's coming to the throne.

1. The Christian church was thereby wholly delivered from persecution. Now the day of her deliverance came after such a dark night of affliction: weeping had continued for a night, but now deliverance and joy came in the morning. Now God appeared to judge his people, and repented himself for his servants, when he saw their power was gone, and that there was none shut up or left. Christians had no persecutions now to fear. Their persecutors now were all put down, and their rulers were some of them Christians like themselves.

2. God now appeared to execute terrible judgments on their enemies. Remarkable are the accounts which history gives of the fearful ends to which the Heathen emperors, princes, generals, captains, and other great men were brought, who had exerted themselves in persecuting the Christians; dying miserably, one after another, under exquisite torments of body, and horrors of conscience, with a most visible hand of God upon them. So that what now came to pass might very fitly be compared to their hiding themselves in the dens and rocks of the mountains.

3. Heathenism now was in a great measure abolished throughout the Roman empire. Images were now destroyed, and Heathen temples pulled down. Images of gold and silver were melted down and coined into money. Some of the chief of their idols, which were curiously wrought, were brought to Constantinople, and there drawn with ropes up and down the streets for the people to behold and laugh at. The Heathen priests were dispersed and banished.

4. The Christian church was brought into a state of great peace and prosperity. Now all Heathen magistrates were put down, and only Christians were advanced to places of authority all over the empire. They had now Christian presidents, Christian governors, Christian judges and officers, instead of their old Heathenish ones. Constantine set himself to put honour upon Christian bishops or ministers, and to build and adorn churches; and now large and beautiful Christian churches

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were erected in all parts of the world, instead of the old Heathen temples.

This revolution was the greatest change in the face of things that ever came to pass in the world since the flood.—Satan, the prince of darkness, that king and god of the Heathen world, was cast out. The roaring lion was conquered by the Lamb of God, in the strongest dominion that he ever had. This was a remarkable accomplishment of Jer. x. 11. *The Gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.*—The chief part of the world was now brought utterly to cast off their old gods and their old religion, to which they had been accustomed much longer than any of their histories give an account of. They had been accustomed to worship the gods so long, that they knew not any beginning of it. It was formerly spoken of as a thing unknown for a nation to change their gods, Jer. ii. 10, 11; but now the greater part of the nations of the known world were brought to cast off all their former gods. That multitude of gods which they worshipped, were all forsaken. Thousands of them were cast away for the worship of the true God, and Christ the only Saviour: and there was a most remarkable fulfilment of Isa. ii. 17, 18. *And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols he shall utterly abolish.* And since that, those gods which were once so famous in the world, as Jupiter, and Saturn and Minerva, and Juno, &c. are only heard of as things of old. They have had no temples, no altars, no worshippers, for many hundred years.

Now is come the end of the old Heathen world in its principal part, the Roman empire. And this great revolution, with that terrible destruction of the great men who had been persecutors, is compared, (Rev. vi.) to the end of the world, and Christ coming to judgment; and is most immediately signified under the sixth seal, which followed upon the souls under the altar crying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? This vision of the sixth seal, by the general consent of expositors, has respect to this downfal of the Heathen Roman empire; though it has a more remote respect to the day of judgment, of which this was a type. The day of judgment cannot be what is immediately intended; because we have an account of many events which were to come to pass after those of the sixth seal.

What came to pass now is also represented by the devil's being cast out of heaven to the earth. In his great strength and glory, over that mighty Roman empire, he had exalted his throne up to heaven. But now he fell like lightning from hea-

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ven, and his kingdom was confined to the meaner and more barbarous nations, or to the lower parts of the world. This is the event foretold, Rev. xii. 9, &c. *And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him*, &c. Satan had formerly tempted Christ, and promised to give him the glory of the kingdoms of the world; but now he is obliged to give it to him even against his will. This was a glorious fulfilment of that promise which God made to his Son, Isa. liii. 12. *Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.* This was a great fulfilment of prophecies concerning the glorious time of the gospel, and particularly those of Daniel. Now it pleased the Lord God of heaven to set up a kingdom on the ruins of Satan's kingdom; and such honour does the Father put upon Christ for the disgrace he suffered when on earth.

From what has been said of the success of the gospel from Christ's ascension to the time of Constantine, we may deduce a strong argument for the truth of the Christian religion, and that the gospel of Jesus Christ is really from God. Particularly,

1. We may gather from what has been said, that it is the gospel, and that only, which has actually been the means of bringing the world to the knowledge of the true God. That those are no Gods whom the Heathen worshipped, and that there is but one only God, is what, now since the gospel has so taught us, we can see to be truth by our own reason. It is plainly agreeable to the light of nature; and it can be easily shown by reason to be demonstrably true. The very Deists themselves acknowledge, that it can be demonstrated, that there is one God, and but one, who has made and governs the world. But now it is evident that it is the gospel, and that only, which has actually been the means of bringing men to the knowledge of this truth. It was not the instructions of philosophers; they tried in vain: *The world by wisdom knew not God.* Till the gospel and the holy scriptures came abroad, all the world lay in ignorance of the true God, and in the greatest darkness with respect to religion, embracing the absurdest opinions and practices, which all civilized nations now acknowledge to be childish fooleries. The light of nature, their own reason, and all the wisdom of learned men, signified nothing till the scriptures came. But when these came abroad, they were successful to bring the world to an acknowledgment of the one only true God, and to worship and serve him.

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And hence it is, that all that part of the world which now acknowledges one only true God—Christians, Jews, Mahometans, and even Deists—originally came to own him. It is owing to this that they are not in general at this day left in Heathenish darkness. They have it all, either immediately from the scriptures, or by tradition from their fathers, who had it first from the scriptures. And doubtless those who now despise the scriptures, and boast of the strength of their own reason, as being sufficient to lead into the knowledge of the one true God, if the gospel had never come abroad in the world to enlighten their forefathers, would have been as sottish and brutish idolaters as the world in general was before the gospel came abroad. The Mahometans, who own but one true God, at first borrowed the notion from the scriptures; for the first Mahometans had been educated in the Christian religion, and apostatized from it. And this is evident, that the scriptures were designed of God to be the proper means to bring the world to the knowledge of himself, rather than human reason, or any thing else. For it is unreasonable to suppose, that the gospel, and that only which God never designed as the proper mean for obtaining this effect, should actually obtain it; and that after human reason, which he designed as the proper mean, had been tried for a great many ages, without any effect. If the scriptures be not the word of God, then they are nothing but darkness and delusion, yea, the greatest delusion that ever was. Now, is it reasonable to suppose, that God in his providence would make use of falsehood and delusion, to bring the world to the knowledge of himself, and that no part of it should be brought to the knowledge of him any other way?

2. The gospel prevailing as it did against such powerful opposition, plainly shows the hand of God. The Roman government, that so violently set itself to hinder the success of the gospel, and to subdue the church of Christ, was the most powerful that ever was in the world; and not only so, but they seemed to have the church in their hands. The Christians who were under their command, never took up arms to defend themselves; they armed themselves with nothing but patience, and such like spiritual weapons; and yet this mighty power could not conquer, but, on the contrary, Christianity conquered them. The Roman empire had subdued many mighty and potent kingdoms; they subdued the Grecian monarchy, though it made the utmost resistance; and yet they could not conquer the church, which was in their hands; but, on the contrary, were subdued, and finally triumphed over by the church.

3. No other sufficient cause can possibly be assigned for

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this propagation of the gospel, but only God's own power. There was certainly some reason. Here was a great and wonderful effect; and this effect was not without some cause.—Now, what other cause can be devised but only the divine power? It was not the outward strength of the instruments which were employed in it. At first the gospel was preached only by a few fishermen, who were without power and worldly interest to support them. It was not their craft and policy that produced this wonderful effect; for they were poor illiterate men. It was not the agreeableness of the story they had to tell to the notions and principles of mankind. This was no pleasant fable: a crucified God and Saviour was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness. It was not the agreeableness of their doctrines to the dispositions of men; for nothing is more contrary to the corruptions of men than the pure doctrines of the gospel. This effect, therefore, can have proceeded from no other cause than the power and agency of God; and if the power of God was thus exercised to cause the gospel to prevail, then the gospel is his word; for surely God does not use his almighty power to promote a mere imposture and delusion.

4. This success is agreeable to what Christ and his apostles foretold. Matt. xvi. 18. *Upon this rock will I build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* John xii. 24. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.* And ver. 31, 32. *Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.* John xvi. 8. *When he* (the comforter) *is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment,—because the prince of this world is judged.*

So the apostle Paul, in 1 Cor. chap. i. 21—28, declares, how that after the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe; and that God chose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.——If any man foretels a thing, very likely in itself to come to pass, from causes which can be foreseen, it is no great argument of a revelation from God: but when a thing is foretold which is very unlikely ever to come to pass, is entirely contrary to the common course of things, and yet it does come to pass just agreeable to the prediction, this is a strong argument that the prediction was from God. Thus the consideration of the *manner* of the propaga-

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tion and success of the gospel during the time which has been spoken of, affords great evidence that the scriptures are the word of God.

PART III.

The Success of Redemption from the Time of Constantine to the Rise of Antichrist.

I AM now to show how the success of Christ's redemption is carried on from the overthrow of the Heathen Roman empire in the time of Constantine the Great, till the rise of Antichrist. And in order to a more clear view of the great works of God in accomplishing the success of Christ's redemption, and our seeing the glory of them, it will be necessary, as in the foregoing periods, to consider not only the success itself, but the opposition made to it.

I. The *opposition*. Satan, the great red dragon, after so sore a conflict with Michael and his angels for the greater part of three hundred years, was at last entirely routed and vanquished; so that he was cast down, as it were, from heaven to the earth. Yet he does not give over his opposition to the woman, the church of Christ, concerning which all this conflict had been; but is still in a rage, renews his attempts, and has recourse to new devices against the church. The serpent, after he is cast out of heaven to the earth, casts out of his mouth water as a flood, to cause the woman to be carried away of the flood. The opposition that he made to the church of Christ before the rise of Antichrist, was principally of two sorts. It was either by corrupting the church of Christ with heresies, or by new endeavours to restore Paganism.

1. After the destruction of the Heathen Roman empire, Satan infested the church with *heresies*. Though there had been so glorious a work of God in delivering the church from her Heathen persecutors, and overthrowing the Heathen empire; yet the days of the church's travail not being ended, and the set time of her prosperity not being yet come, (as being what was to succeed the fall of Antichrist,) therefore the peace and prosperity which the church enjoyed in Constantine's time, was but very short. It was a respite, which gave the church a time of peace and silence, as it were, *for half an hour*, wherein the four angels held the four winds from blowing, till the servants of God should be sealed in their foreheads. But

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the church soon began to be greatly infested with heresies; the two principal, and those which did most infest the church, were the Arian and Pelagian.

The *Arians* began soon after Constantine came to the throne. They denied the doctrine of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ and the Holy Ghost, and maintained, that they were but mere creatures. This heresy increased more and more in the church, and prevailed like a flood which threatened to overflow all, and entirely to carry away the church, insomuch that before the close of the fourth century, the greater part of the Christian church were become Arians. Some emperors, the successors of Constantine, were Arians; so that being the prevailing party, and having the civil authority on their side, they raised a great persecution against the true church of Christ; so that this heresy might well be compared to a flood out of the mouth of the serpent, which threatened to overthrow all, and quite carry away the woman.

The *Pelagian* heresy arose in the beginning of the next century. It began by one PELAGIUS, who was born in Britain: his British name was MORGAN. He denied original sin and the influence of the Spirit of God in conversion, and held the power of free will, and many other things of like tendency; and this heresy did for awhile greatly infest the church. Pelagius's principal antagonist, who wrote in defence of the orthodox faith, was St. Augustin.

2. The other kind of opposition which Satan made against the church, was in his endeavours to restore *Paganism*. His first attempt was by Julian the apostate. Julian was nephew to Constantine the Great. When Constantine died, he left his empire to three sons; and after their death, Julian the apostate reigned in their stead. He had been a professed Christian, but he fell from Christianity, and turned Pagan; and therefore is called *the apostate*. When he came to the throne, he used his utmost endeavours to overthrow the Christian church, and set up Paganism again in the empire. He put down the Christian magistrates, and set up Heathens in their room. He rebuilt the Heathen temples, set up the Heathen worship, and became a most notorious persecutor of the Christians. He used to call Christ, by way of reproach, *the Galilean*. He was killed by a lance in his wars with the Persians. When he saw that he was mortally wounded, he took a handful of his blood, and threw it up towards heaven, crying out, "Thou hast overcome, O Galilean." He is commonly thought by divines to have committed the unpardonable sin.

Another way that Satan attempted to restore Paganism in the Roman empire, was by *the invasions and conquests of Heathen nations*. For in this space of time, the Goths and

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Vandals, and other barbarous nations from the north, invaded the empire, and obtained great conquests. They even overran the empire, and in the fifth century took the city of Rome, and finally conquered, and took possession of the western half of the empire, and divided it amongst them. It was divided into ten kingdoms, with which began the ten horns of the beast; for we are told, that the ten horns are ten kings, who should rise in the latter part of the Roman empire: these are also represented by the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image. The invasion and conquests of these Heathen nations are supposed to be foretold in the 8th chapter of Revelation, in what came to pass under the sounding of the four first trumpets. Now, by their means, Heathenism was again for awhile restored after it had been rooted out. So much for the opposition of Satan against the success of the gospel during this space before the rise of Antichrist. I proceed,

II. To show what *success* there was of the gospel in this space, notwithstanding this opposition.

1. I would observe, that the opposition of Satan in those things was baffled. Though the dragon cast out of his mouth such a flood after the woman to carry her away, yet he could not obtain his design; but the earth helped the woman, and opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. These heresies, which for awhile so much prevailed, after awhile dwindled away, and orthodoxy was again restored.

2. The gospel, during this space of time, was further propagated amongst many barbarous nations in the confines of the Roman empire. In the time of Constantine there was a considerable propagation of the gospel in the East Indies, chiefly by the ministry of one Frumentius. Great numbers of the Iberians were converted to Christianity by a Christian woman of eminent piety, whom they had taken captive. And some account is given of several other barbarous nations who were not within the Roman empire, that great numbers of them were brought to receive the gospel by the teaching and example of captives whom they had taken in war. About the year of Christ three hundred and seventy-two, the gospel was propagated among the barbarous inhabitants of Arabia; and among some of the northern nations: particularly a prince of the Goths about this time became Christian, and a great number of his people with him. Towards the latter end of this century, the gospel was also further propagated among the Persians; and also the Scythians, a barbarous people, whom the apostle mentions, Col. iii. 11. *Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free.*

And after this, about the year four hundred and thirty, there was a remarkable conversion of *the Burgundians*, to the

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Christian faith. New the gospel began to be propagated in Ireland; and the Irish, who till new had been Heathen, began to receive the Christian faith. About the same time it was further propagated among some barbarous people in Scotland, and in some other places. In the next century, *Zathus*, a Heathen king, who ruled over the *Colchians*, was brought to renounce his Heathenism, and to embrace the Christian religion. Several other barbarous nations are recorded to have renounced Heathenism and embraced Christianity about this time, that I cannot stand to mention.—Thus I have briefly considered the principal events of providence which concern the success of the gospel of Christ from Constantine to the rise of Antichrist.

PART IV.

The Success of Redemption from the Rise of Antichrist to the Reformation.

I come now to the darkest and most dismal day that ever the Christian church saw, and probably the darkest that ever it will see; from the rise of Antichrist till the Reformation by Luther and others. The true church in this space was for many hundred years in a state of great obscurity; like the woman in the wilderness, she was almost hid from sight and observation. In speaking of the events of this space of time, I would,—1. Take notice of the great machinations and works of Satan against the kingdom of Christ;—2. How the church of Christ was upheld during this time.

I. I would take notice of the great machinations and works of Satan against the kingdom of Christ during this time. Satan had done great things against the Christian church before, but had been baffled once and again. Michael and his angels had obtained a glorious victory. How terrible was his opposition during the continuance of the Heathen empire; and how glorious was Christ's victory and triumph over him in the time of Constantine! It pleased God now to prepare the way for a yet more glorious victory over him; he is suffered to renew his strength, and to do the utmost that his power and subtilty can effect. He has a long time to lay his schemes, to establish his interest, and make his matters strong. God suffers him to carry his designs a great length indeed, almost to the swallowing

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up of his church; and to exercise a high, proud, and almost uncontrouled dominion in the world, a long time before Christ finally conquers, and utterly ruins his visible kingdom. This he will do in the time of the destruction of Antichrist: thus gloriously triumphing over Satan, after he has done to the utmost of his power and subtilty; after he has lifted himself highest of all, and dealt most proudly.

The two great works of the devil, in this space of time, against the kingdom of Christ, are his creating his Antichristian and Mahometan kingdoms; which both together comprehend the ancient Roman empire; the kingdom of Antichrist the Western, and the Mahometan kingdom the Eastern empire. As the scriptures in the book of Revelation represent it, it is in the destruction of these that the glorious victory of Christ, at the introduction of the glorious times of the church, will mainly consist. And here let us briefly observe how Satan erects and maintains these two great kingdoms of his in opposition to the kingdom of Christ.

1. With respect to the kingdom of *Antichrist*. This seems to be the master-piece of all the contrivances of the devil against the kingdom of Christ, and is evidently so spoken of in scripture. Antichrist is *that* man of sin, (2 Thess. ii. 3.) emphatically, as though he were so eminently. He is called *Antichrist*, which signifies the opponent or adversary of Christ, not because he is the *only* opponent of Christ; for the apostle John observes, that in his days there were *many* Antichrists. But yet this is called *the Antichrist*, as though there were none but he, because he was so eminently, and above all others. So this contrivance of the devil, is called *the mystery of iniquity*, 2 Thess. ii. 7. We find no enemy of Christ one half so much spoken of in the prophecies of Revelation as this; and the destruction of no enemy is spoken of as so glorious, and so happy for the church.

This is a contrivance to turn the ministry of the Christian church into a ministry of the devil, and the angels of the churches into fallen angels. In the tyranny, superstition, idolatry, and persecution, which he sets up, he contrives to make an image of ancient Paganism, and more than to restore what was lost by the overthrow of Paganism in the time of Constantine. By these means, the head of the beast, which was wounded unto death in Constantine, has his deadly wound healed in Antichrist, Rev. xiii. 3. And the dragon, that formerly reigned in the Heathen Roman empire, being cast out thence, after the beast with seven heads and ten horns rises up out of the sea, gives him his power, and seat, and great authority; and all the world wonders after the beast.

I am far from pretending to determine the time when the reign of Antichrist began, which is a point that has been so

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much controverted among divines and expositors. It is certain that the twelve hundred and sixty days, or years, which are so often in scripture mentioned as the time of the continuance of Antichrist's reign, did not commence before the year of Christ four hundred and seventy-nine; because if they did, they would have ended, and Antichrist would have fallen before now. The rise of Antichrist was gradual. The Christian church corrupted itself in many things presently after Constantine's time; growing more and more superstitious in its worship, and by degrees bringing in many ceremonies into the worship of God, till at length they brought in the worship of saints, and set up images in their churches. The clergy in general, and especially the bishop of Rome, assumed more and more authority to himself. In the primitive times, he was only a minister of a congregation; then a standing moderator of a presbytery; then a diocesan bishop; then a metropolitan, which is equivalent to an archbishop; then a patriarch. Afterwards he claimed the power of universal bishop over the whole Christian church; wherein he was opposed for awhile, but afterwards was confirmed in it by the civil power of the Emperor in the year six hundred and six. After that he claimed the power of a temporal prince, and so was wont to carry two swords, to signify that both the temporal and spiritual sword was his. He claimed more and more authority, till at length, as Christ's vicegerent on earth, he claimed the very same power that Christ would have done, if he was present on earth reigning on his throne; or the same power that belongs to God, and was used to be called *God on earth;* to be submitted to by all the princes of Christendom. He claimed power to crown princes, and to degrade them at his pleasure; and this power was owned: yea, kings and emperors used to kiss his feet. The emperors received their crowns at his hands; and princes were wont to dread the displeasure of the Pope, as they would dread a thunderbolt from heaven. If the Pope was pleased to excommunicate a prince, all his subjects were at once freed from their allegiance to him; and obliged not to own him any more, on pain of excommunication; and not only so, but any man might kill him wherever he found him. Further, the Pope was believed to have power to damn men at pleasure; for whoever died under his excommunication, was looked upon as certainly damned. Several emperors were actually deposed, and ejected, and died miserably by his means; and if the people of any state or kingdom did not please him, he had power to lay that state or kingdom under an interdict, which was a sentence pronounced by the Pope against that state or kingdom, whereby all sacred administrations among them could have no validity. There could be no valid baptisms, or sacraments, or prayers, or preaching, or pardons, till that

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interdict was taken off; so that that people remained, in their apprehension, in a miserable, damnable state, and therefore dreaded it as they would a storm of fire and brimstone from heaven. And in order to execute his wrath on a prince or people with whom he was displeased, other princes must also be put to a great deal of trouble and expence.

And as the Pope and his clergy robbed the people of their ecclesiastical and civil liberties and privileges, so they also robbed them of their estates, drained all Christendom of their money. They engrossed most of their riches into their own coffers, by vast revenues, besides pay for pardons and indulgences, baptisms and extreme unctions, deliverance out of purgatory, and a hundred other things.——See how well this agrees with the prophecies, 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. Dan. vii. 20, 21. Rev. xiii. 6, 7. and chap. xvii. 3, 4.

During this time also superstition and ignorance more and more prevailed. The holy scriptures by degrees were taken out of the hands of the laity, the better to promote the unscriptural and wicked designs of the Pope and the clergy; and instead of promoting knowledge among the people, they industriously promoted ignorance. It was a received maxim among them, That ignorance is the mother of devotion: and so great was the darkness of those times, that learning was almost extinct in the world. The very priests themselves, most of them, were barbarously ignorant as to any commendable learning, or any other knowledge, than their hellish craft in oppressing and tyrannizing over the souls of the people.—The superstition and wickedness of the church of Rome, kept growing worse and worse till the very time of the Reformation, and the whole Christian world were led away into this great defection, excepting the remains of the Christian church in the Eastern empire, that had not been utterly overthrown by the Turks. The Greek church, and some others, were also sunk into great darkness and gross superstition, excepting also those few that were the people of God, who are represented by the woman in the wilderness, and God's two witnesses, of which more hereafter.——This is one of those two great kingdoms which the devil in this period erected in opposition to the kingdom of Christ, and was the greatest and chief.

2. The Mahometan kingdom is another of mighty power and vast extent, set up by Satan against the kingdom of Christ. He set this up in the Eastern empire, as he did that of Antichrist in the Western.

Mahomet was born in the year of Christ five hundred and seventy, in Arabia. When he was about forty years of age, he began to boast that he was the great prophet of God; and proceeded to teach his new-invented religion, of which he was

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to be worshipped as the head next under God. He published his Alcoran, which he pretended he received from the angel Gabriel; and being a subtle crafty man, possessed of considerable wealth, and living among a people who were very ignorant, and greatly divided in their opinions on religious matters, he by subtilty and fair promises of a sensual paradise, gained a number to be his followers. He set up for their prince, and propagated his religion by the sword, and made it meritorious of paradise to fight for him. By such means his party grew, and went on fighting till they conquered and brought over the neighbouring countries; and so his party gradually increased till they over-ran a great part of the world. First, the Saracens were some of his followers, who were a people of Arabia, where Mahomet lived, and who about the year seven hundred, dreadfully wasted the Roman empire.—They over-ran a great many countries belonging to the empire, and continued their conquests for a long time. These are supposed to be meant by the locusts mentioned in the 9th chapter of Revelation.

And then the Turks, who were originally different from the Saracens, became followers of Mahomet, and conquered all the Eastern empire. They began their empire about the year of Christ twelve hundred and ninety-six; began to invade Europe in the year thirteen hundred; took Constantinople, and so became masters of all the Eastern empire, in the year fourteen hundred and fifty-three. And thus all the cities and countries where stood those famous churches of which we read in the New Testament, as Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, &c. now became subject to the Turks. These are supposed to be prophesied of by the horsemen in the 9th chapter of Revelation, beginning with the 15th verse. And the remains of the Christians in those parts of the world, who are mostly of the Greek church, are in miserable slavery under these Turks; are treated with a great deal of barbarity and cruelty, and are become mostly very ignorant and superstitious.

Thus I have shown what great works of Satan were wrought during this space of time in opposition to the kingdom of Christ.

II. I come now to show how the church of Christ was upheld through this dark time.

1. It is to be observed, that towards the former part of this space of time, some of the nations of Christendom held out a long time before they complied with the corruptions and usurpations of the church of Rome. Though all the world wondered after the beast, yet all nations did not fall in at once. Many of the principal corruptions of the church of Rome were brought in with a great deal of struggle and opposition;

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and particularly, when the Pope gave out, that he was universal bishop, many churches greatly opposed him in it; and it was a long time before they would yield to his exorbitant claims. And so, when the worship of images was first brought into the churches, there were many who greatly opposed it, and long held out against it. And so with respect to other corruptions of the church of Rome. Those who dwelt nearer to the city of Rome complied sooner; but some that were more remote, were a long time before they could be induced to put their necks under the yoke: and particularly a great part of the churches in England, Scotland, and France, retained the ancient purity of doctrine and worship much longer than many others who were nearer the chief seat of Antichrist.

2. In every age of this dark time, there appeared particular persons in all parts of Christendom, who bore a testimony against the corruptions and tyranny of the church of Rome. There is no one age of Antichrist, even in the darkest times, but ecclesiastical historians mention many by name who manifested an abhorrence of the Pope, and his idolatrous worship, and pleaded for the ancient purity of doctrine and worship. God was pleased to maintain an uninterrupted succession of many witnesses through the whole time, in Germany, France, Britain, and other countries; private persons and ministers, some magistrates and persons of great distinction.—And there were numbers in every age who were persecuted and put to death for this testimony.

3. Besides these particular persons dispersed, there was a certain people called the *Waldenses*, who lived separate from all the rest of the world, and constantly bore a testimony against the church of Rome through all this dark time. The place where they dwelt was the Vaudois, or the five valleys of Piedmont, a very mountainous country, between Italy and France; it was compassed about with those exceeding high mountains, *the Alps*, which were almost impassable, and therefore the valleys were almost inaccessible. There this people lived for many ages, in a state of separation from all the world, having very little to do with any other people. And there they served God in the ancient purity of his worship, and never submitted to the church of Rome. This probably was the place especially meant in the 12th chapter of Revelation, 6th verse, as prepared of God for the woman, that they should feed her there during the reign of Antichrist.

Some of the Popish writers themselves own, that this people never submitted to the church of Rome. One of the Popish writers, speaking of the Waldenses, says, The heresy of the Waldenses is the oldest heresy in the world. It is supposed that they first betook themselves to this place among the mountains, to hide themselves from the severity of the Heathen

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persecutions which existed before Constantine the Great. And thus the woman fled into the wilderness from the face of the serpent. Rev. xii. 6, 14. *And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place: where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.* The people being settled there, their posterity continued from age to age: and being, as it were, by natural walls, as well as by God's grace, separated from the rest of the world, they never partook of the overflowing corruption.

These especially were those virgins who were not defiled, when other churches prostituted themselves; but they kept themselves pure for Christ alone. They followed the Lamb, their spiritual husband, whithersoever he went: they followed him into this hideous wilderness, Rev. xiv. 4, 5.——Their doctrine and worship appear to be the same with the Protestant doctrine and worship; and by the confession of Popish writers, they were a people remarkable for the strictness of their lives, for charity and other Christian virtues. They lived in external poverty in this hideous country; but they chose this rather than comply with the great corruptions of the rest of the world.

Living in so secret a place, it was a long time before they were noticed. But at last, falling under observation, the Romanists went out in mighty armies against them, fell upon them with insatiable cruelty, barbarously massacring, and putting to death men, women, and children, with all imaginable tortures. Their enemies continued persecuting them with but little intermission for several hundred years; by which means many were driven out of the valleys of Piedmont. These fled into all parts of Europe, carrying with them their doctrine, to which many were brought over. Their persecutors could not by all their cruelties extirpate the church of God; so fulfilling his word, "that the gates of hell should not prevail against it."

4. Towards the latter part of this dark time, several noted divines openly appeared to defend the truth, and bear testimony against the corruptions of the church of Rome.—The first and principal of these was a certain English divine, *John Wickliff*, who appeared about one hundred and forty years before the Reformation; he strenuously opposed the Popish religion, taught the same doctrine that the Reformers afterwards did, and had many followers in England. He was hotly persecuted in his lifetime, yet died in peace; but after he was buried, his bones were dug up by his persecutors, and burnt. His followers remained in considerable numbers in England till the Reformation; they were cruelly persecuted, and multitudes were put to death for their religion.

Wickliff had many disciples, not only in England, but in

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other parts of Europe, whither his books were carried; and particularly in Bohemia, among whom were two eminent divines, *John Huss*, and *Jerom*, a divine of Prague, the chief city of Bohemia. These strenuously opposed the church of Rome, and had many who adhered to them. They were both burnt by the Papists for their doctrine; and their followers in Bohemia were cruelly persecuted, but never extirpated till the Reformation.

PART V.

The Success of Redemption from the Reformation to the present Time.

THUS having gone through the dark time of the church, I come now to consider that part which begins with the Reformation, and reaches to the present time. And here I would, 1. Speak of the Reformation itself; 2. The opposition which the devil has made to the Reformed church; 3. What success there has lately been of the gospel in one place and another; 4. What the state of things is now in the world with regard to the church of Christ, and the success of his purchase.

I. The first thing to be taken notice of is the *Reformation itself*. This was begun in Germany, about the year fifteen hundred and fifteen, by the preaching of Martin Luther, who being stirred in his spirit to see the horrid practices of the Popish clergy—and having set himself diligently to enquire after truth by the study of the holy scriptures, and the writings of the ancient fathers of the church—very openly and boldly decried the corruptions and usurpations of the Romish church in his preaching and writings. He had soon a great number who fell in with him; among whom was the Elector of Saxony, the sovereign prince of the country to which he belonged. This greatly alarmed the church of Rome; it rallied all its force to oppose him and his doctrine, and fierce wars and persecutions were raised against it. But yet it went on by the labours of Luther and Melancthon in Germany, Zuinglius in Switzerland, and other eminent divines, who were cotemporary with Luther; particularly Calvin, who appeared after the beginning of the Reformation, but was one of the most eminent Reformers.

Many of the princes of Germany soon fell in with the Reformed religion, and many other states and kingdoms in Europe, as England, Scotland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway,

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great part of France, Poland, Lithuania, Switzerland, and the Low Countries. So that it is thought, that heretofore about half Christendom were of the Protestant religion; though since, the Papists have gained ground: so that the Protestants now have not so great a proportion.

Thus God began gloriously to revive his church again, and advance the kingdom of his Son; after such a dismal night of darkness from the rise of Antichrist to that time. There had been many endeavours used by the witnesses for the truth for a reformation before. But now when God's appointed time was come, his work went on with a swift and wonderful progress; and Antichrist, who had been rising higher and higher from his beginning till that time, was swiftly and suddenly brought down; he fell half-way towards utter ruin, and never has been able to rise again to his former height. A certain late expositor (Mr. LOWMAN,) who explains the five first vials in the 16th chapter of Revelation with greater probability perhaps than any who went before him, explains the fifth vial, which was poured out on the seat of the beast, of what came to pass in the Reformation; having explained the four preceeding vials of certain great judgments which God brought on the Popish dominions before the Reformation. It is said, Rev. xvi. 10, that "the fifth angel poured out his vial on the seat of the beast;" in the original, it is *the throne of the beast;* "and his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds." He poured out his vial upon the throne of the beast, *i. e.* on the authority and dominion of the Pope: so the word *throne* is often used in scripture; so 1 Kings i. 37. *As the Lord hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord King David; i. e.* make his dominion and authority greater, and his kingdom more glorious.

But now, in the Reformation, the vials of God's wrath were poured out on the throne of the beast, till it was terribly shaken and diminished. The Pope's authority and dominion was so greatly diminished, both as to extent and degree, that he lost about half his dominions; besides that authority, even in Popish dominions, which he had before. He is not regarded, and his power is dreaded in no measure as it was wont to be. The powers of Europe have learned not to put their necks under the Pope's feet. He is as a lion that has lost his teeth, in comparison of what he was once. And when the Pope and his clergy, enraged to see their authority so diminished at the Reformation, laid their heads together, and joined their forces to destroy the Reformation; their policy, which was wont to serve them so well, failed. They found their kingdom full of

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darkness, so that they could do nothing, any more than the Egyptians, who rose not from their seats for three days. The Reformed church was defended as Lot and the angels were in Sodom, by smiting the Sodomites with darkness or blindness, so that they could not find the door. God then fulfilled that in Job v. 11, &c. "To set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety. He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprize. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong. They meet with darkness in the day-time, and grope in the noon-day as in the night. But he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty."—Those proud enemies of God's people being so disappointed, and finding themselves so unable to uphold their own dominion and authority, were made as it were to gnaw their tongues for pain, or to bite them for mere rage.

II. I proceed to show what *opposition* has been made by Satan and his adherents, to this success of Christ's purchase by the Reformation; observing as we go along, how far they have been baffled, and how far they have been successful.

The opposition which Satan has made against the Reformed religion has been principally of the following kinds, *viz.* that which was made, 1. by a general council of the church of Rome; 2. by secret plots and devices; 3. by open wars and invasions; 4. by cruel oppression and persecution; and, 5. by bringing in corrupt opinions.

1. The first opposition that I shall notice is that which was made by the clergy of the church of Rome in a *general council.* This was the famous council of Trent, which the Pope called a little while after the Reformation. In that council, there met together six cardinals, thirty-two archbishops, two hundred and twenty-eight bishops, besides innumerable others of the Romish clergy. This council, in all their sittings, including the times of intermission, was held for twenty-five years together. Their main business all this while was to concert measures for establishing the church of Rome against the Reformers, and for destroying the Reformation. But it proved that they were not able to perform their enterprize. The Reformed church, notwithstanding their great council, remained, and still remains. So that the counsel of the froward is carried headlong; their kingdom is full of darkness, and they weary themselves to find the door.

Thus the church of Rome, instead of repenting of their deeds, when such clear light was held forth to them by Luther and other servants of God, persisted, by general agreement in council, in their vile corruptions and wickedness, and obstinate opposition to the kingdom of Christ. The doctrines and

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practices of the church of Rome, which were chiefly condemned by the Reformed, were confirmed by the decrees of their council; and the corruptions in many respects, were carried higher than ever before. They uttered blasphemous reproaches and curses against the Reformed religion, and all the Reformed church was excommunicated and anathematized by them. According to the prophecy, *they blasphemed God.* Thus God hardened their hearts, [*i. e.* left them to do so,] intending to destroy them.

2. The Papists have often endeavoured to overthrow the Reformation by *secret plots* and conspiracies. There were many plots against the life of Luther. The Papists were contriving to dispatch him out of their way; and he, being a very bold man, often very much exposed himself in the cause of Christ: but yet they were wonderfully prevented from hurting him, and he at last died in his bed in peace. There have been innumerable schemes secretly laid for the overthrow of the Protestant religion; one of the most considerable, and which seemed to be the most likely to have taken effect, was that in the time of King James II. of England. There was at that time a strong conspiracy between the King of England and Lewis XIV. of France, who were both Papists, to extirpate the Northern heresy, as they called the Protestant religion, not only out of England, but out of all Europe; and they had laid their schemes so, that they seemed to be almost sure of their purpose. They looked upon it, that if the Reformed religion were suppressed in the British realms, and in the Netherlands, which were the strongest part, and chief defence of the Protestant interest, they should have easy work with the rest. And just as their matters seemed to be come to a head, and their enterprize ripe for execution, God in his providence, suddenly dashed all their schemes in pieces by the Revolution, at the coming in of King William and Queen Mary; by which all their designs were at an end. Now the Protestant interest was more strongly established, by the crown of England being transferred to the Protestant house of Hanover, and a Papist being, by the constitution of the nation, for ever rendered incapable of wearing the crown of England. Thus they groped in darkness at noon-day as in the night, and their hands could not perform their enterprize, and their kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain.

After this, there was a deep design laid to bring the same thing to pass in the latter end of Queen Anne's reign, by the bringing in of the Popish pretender; which was no less suddenly and totally baffled by divine Providence; as all the plots against the Reformation by bringing in the pretender have been.

3. The Reformation has often been opposed by *open wars*

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and invasions. The Emperor of Germany declared war with the Duke of Saxony, and the principal men who favoured and received Luther's doctrine. But they could not obtain their end; they could not suppress the Reformation. For the same end, some time after, the King of Spain maintained a long war with Holland and the Low Countries. But those cruel wars issued greatly to the disadvantage of the Romish church, as they occasioned the setting up of one of the most powerful Protestant states in Europe. The design of the Spanish invasion of England in Queen Elizabeth's time, was to suppress and root out the Reformed religion; and therefore they brought in their fleet all manner of instruments of cruelty wherewith to torture the Protestants who would not renounce the Protestant religion. But their design was totally baffled, and their mighty fleet in a great measure ruined.

4. Satan has opposed the Reformation with *cruel persecutions.* The persecutions with which the Protestants have been harassed by the church of Rome, have in many respects been far beyond any of the Heathen persecutions. So that Antichrist has proved the greatest and most cruel enemy to the church of Christ that ever was in the world, in this, as well as in all other respects; agreeable to the description given of the church of Rome, Rev. xvii. 6. *And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.* And, chap. xviii. 24. *And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all them that were slain upon the earth.*

The Heathen persecutions had been very dreadful; but now persecution by the church of Rome was improved, and studied, and cultivated, as an art or science. Such ways of afflicting and tormenting were found out, as are beyond the invention of ordinary men, or men unstudied in those things; and beyond the invention of all former ages. And that persecution might be managed the more effectually, there were certain societies of men established in various parts of the Popish dominions, whose business it should be to study, and improve, and practise persecution in its highest perfection, viz. *the courts of inquisition.* The particular histories of the Romish persecution, and their courts of inquisition, will give that idea which a few words cannot express.

When the Reformation began, the beast with seven heads and ten horns began to rage in a dreadful manner. The church of Rome renewed its persecution of the poor Waldenses, and great multitudes of them were cruelly tortured and put to death. Soon after the Reformation, there were terrible persecutions in various parts of Germany; and especially in Bohemia, which lasted for thirty years together; in which so much blood was shed for the sake of religion, that a certain

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writer compares it to the plenty of waters of the great rivers of Germany. The countries of Poland, Lithuania, and Hungary, were in like manner deluged with Protestant blood.

By means of these and other cruel persecutions, the Protestant religion was in a great measure suppressed in Bohemia, the Palatinate, and Hungary, which before were Protestant countries. Thus was fulfilled what was foretold of the little horn, Dan. vii. 20, 21. "— and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell, even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them." And what was foretold of the beast having seven heads and ten horns, Rev. xiii. 7. "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations."

Holland and the other Low Countries were for many years a scene of nothing but the most affecting and amazing cruelties, being deluged with the blood of Protestants, under the merciless hands of the Spaniards, to whom they were then in subjection. But in this persecution, the devil in a great measure failed of his purpose; as it issued in a great part of the Netherlands casting off the Spanish yoke, and setting up a wealthy and powerful Protestant state, to the great defence of the Protestant cause ever since.

France also is another country, which, since the Reformation, in some respects, perhaps more than any other, has been a scene of dreadful cruelties suffered by the Protestants. After many cruelties had been exercised towards the Protestants in that kingdom, there was begun a persecution of them in the year fifteen hundred and seventy-one, in the reign of Charles IX. king of France. It began with a cruel massacre, wherein seventy thousand Protestants were slain in a few days, as the king boasted; and in all this persecution, he slew, as is supposed, three hundred thousand martyrs. And it is reckoned, that about this time, within thirty years, there were martyred in this kingdom, for the Protestant religion, thirty-nine princes, one hundred and forty-eight counts, two hundred and thirty-four barons, one hundred and forty-seven thousand five hundred and eighteen gentlemen, and seven hundred and sixty thousand common people.

But all these persecutions were, for exquisite cruelty, far exceeded by those which followed in the reign of Lewis XIV. which indeed are supposed to exceed all others; and being long continued, by reason of the long reign of that king, they almost wholly extirpated the Protestant religion out of that kingdom, where had flourished a multitude of famous Pro-

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testant churches. Thus it was given to the beast to make war with the saints, and to overcome them.

There was also a terrible persecution in England in Queen Mary's time, wherein great numbers in all parts of the kingdom were burnt alive. And after this, though the Protestant religion has been for the most part established by law in England, yet there have been very severe persecutions by the high churchmen, who symbolize in many things with the Papists. Such was that which occasioned our forefathers to flee from their native country, and to come and settle in this land, which was then a hideous howling wilderness. And these persecutions were continued with little intermission till King William came to the throne.

Scotland has also been the scene, for many years together, of cruelties and blood by the hands of high churchmen, such as came very little short of the Popish persecution in Queen Mary's days, and in many things much exceeded it, which continued till they were delivered by King William.

Ireland also has been, as it were, overwhelmed with Protestant blood. In the days of King Charles I. of England, above two hundred thousand Protestants were cruelly murdered in that kingdom in a few days; the Papists, by a secret agreement, rising at an appointed time, intending to kill every Protestant in the kingdom at once.

Besides these, there have been very cruel persecutions in Italy and Spain, and other places, which I shall not stand to relate.—Thus did the devil, and his great minister, Antichrist, rage with such violence and cruelty against the church of Christ! and thus did the whore of Babylon make herself drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus! By these persecutions the Protestant church has been much diminished! Yet have they not been able to prevail; but still the Protestant church is upheld, and Christ fulfils his promise, that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

5. The last kind of opposition that Satan has made to the Reformation is by *corrupt opinions.* The first opposition of this kind was by the sect of the *Anabaptists*, which began about four or five years after the Reformation itself. This sect, as it first appeared in Germany, were vastly more extravagant than the present Anabaptists are in England. They held a great many exceeding corrupt opinions. One tenet of theirs was, That there ought to be no civil authority, and that it was lawful to rebel against it. And on this principle they refused to submit to magistrates, or any human laws; and gathered together in vast armies, to defend themselves against their civil rulers, and put all Germany into an uproar, and so kept it for some time.

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The next opposition of this kind to the Reformation was that which was made by *enthusiasts*. Those are called enthusiasts who falsely pretend to be inspired by the Holy Ghost, as the prophets were. These began in Germany about ten years after Luther began the Reformation; and there arose various sects of them, who were exceeding wild and extravagant. The followers of these are the Quakers in England, and other parts of the British dominions.

The next to these were the *Socinians*, who had their beginning chiefly in Poland, by the teaching of *Lælius Socinus* and *Faustus Socinus*. They held, that Christ was a mere man, and denied Christ's satisfaction and most of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion. Their heresy has since been greatly propagated among Protestants in Poland, Germany, Holland, England, and other places.

After these arose the *Arminians*. They take their name from a Dutchman, whose name was *Jacobus Van Harmin*, which, turned into Latin, is called *Jacobus Arminius;* and from his name the whole sect are called *Arminians*. This Jacobus Arminius was first a minister at Amsterdam, and then a professor of divinity in the university of Leyden. He had many followers in Holland. There was upon this a synod of all the reformed churches called together, who met at Dort in Holland. The synod of Dort condemned them; but yet they spread and prevailed. They began to prevail in England in the reign of Charles I. especially in the church of England. The church of England divines before that were almost universally Calvinists: but since that, Arminianism has gradually more and more prevailed, till they are become almost universally Arminians. And not only so, but Arminianism has greatly prevailed among the Dissenters, and has spread greatly in New England, as well as Old.

Since this, *Arianism* has been revived. Arianism, a little after Constantine's time, almost swallowed up the Christian world, like a flood out of the mouth of the serpent which threatened to swallow up the woman. And of late years, this heresy has been revived in England, and greatly prevails there, both in the church of England, and among Dissenters. These hold, that Christ is but a mere creature, though they grant that he is the greatest of all creatures.

Another thing which has of late exceedingly prevailed among Protestants, and especially in England, is Deism. The Deists wholly cast off the Christian religion, and are professed infidels. Indeed, they own the being of God, but deny any revealed religion, or any word of God at all; and say, that God has given mankind no other light to walk by but their own reason. With these opinions our nation, which is the

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principal nation of the Reformation, is very much over-run, and they prevail more and more. Thus much concerning the opposition that Satan has made against the Reformation.

III. I proceed now to show what *success* the gospel has had in these later times of the Reformed church. This success may be reduced to three heads: 1. Reformation in doctrine and worship in countries called Christian; 2. Propagation of the gospel among the Heathen; 3. Revival of religion in the power and practice of it.

1. As to the first, *viz.* reformation in *doctrine*, the most considerable success of late has been in the empire of Muscovy, which is a country of vast extent. The people of this country, so many of them as call themselves Christians, professed to be of the Greek church; but were barbarously ignorant, and very superstitious, till of late years. Their late Emperor Peter the Great, set himself to reform his dominions, took great pains to bring them out of their darkness, and to have them instructed in religion. To that end, he set up schools of learning, ordered the Bible to be printed in the language of the country, made a law that every family should keep the holy scriptures in their houses, that every person should be able to read the same, and that no person should be allowed to marry till they were able to read the scriptures. He also reformed the churches of his country of many of their superstitions, whereby the religion professed and practised in Muscovy is much nearer to that of the Protestants than formerly it used to be. This emperor gave great encouragement to the exercise of the Protestant religion in his dominions. And since that, Muscovy is become a land of light, in comparison of what it was fifty years past.

2. As to the second kind of success which the gospel has lately had, *viz.* its *propagation* among the Heathen, I would take notice of three things.

(1.) The propagation of the gospel among the Heathen here in *America*. This American continent, which is a very great part of the world, and, together with its neighbouring seas adjoining, takes up one side of the globe, was wholly unknown to all Christian nations till these latter times. It was not known that there was any such part of the world, though it was very full of people; and therefore the devil had this part of the world as it were secure to himself, out of the reach of the light of the gospel, and so out of the way of molestation in his dominion over them. Here the many nations of Indians worshipped him as God from age to age, while the gospel was confined to the opposite side of the globe. It is probably supposed, from some remaining accounts, that the occasion of first peopling America was this: that the devil, being alarmed and surprised by the wonderful success of the

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gospel the first three hundred years after Christ, and by the downfal of the Heathen empire in the time of Constantine—and seeing the gospel spread so fast, and fearing that his Heathenish kingdom would be wholly overthrown through the world—led away a people from the other continent into America, that they might be quite out of the reach of the gospel, that here he might quietly possess them, and reign over them as their god.—Many writers intimate, that some of the Indian nations, when the Europeans first came into America, had a tradition among them, that their god first led them into this continent, and went before them in an ark.

However, it is certain that the devil did here quietly enjoy his dominion over the poor Indians for many ages. But in later times God has sent the gospel into these parts, and now the Christian church is set up here in New England, and in other parts of America, where before had been nothing but the grossest Heathenish darkness. Great part of America is now full of Bibles, and full of at least the *form* of the worship of the true God and Jesus Christ, where the name of Christ before had not been heard of for many ages, if at all. And though there has been but a small propagation of the gospel among the Heathen here, in comparison of what were to be wished for; yet there has been something worthy of notice.—There was something remarkable in New England, both at first and of late, and in other parts of America, among many Indians, of an inclination to be instructed in the Christian religion.

However small the propagation of the gospel among the Heathen here in America has been hitherto; yet I think we may well look upon the discovery of so great a part of the world, and bringing the gospel into it, as one thing by which divine providence is preparing the way for the future glorious times of the church, when Satan's kingdom shall be overthrown throughout the whole habitable globe, on every side, and on all its continents. When those times come, then doubtless the gospel shall have glorious success, and all the inhabitants of this new-discovered world shall become subjects of the kingdom of Christ, as well as all the other ends of the earth. In all probability, providence has so ordered it, that the mariner's compass, (which is an invention of later times, whereby men are enabled to sail over the widest ocean, when before they durst not venture far from land,) should prove a preparation for what God intends to bring to pass in the glorious times of the church, *viz.* the sending forth the gospel wherever any of the children of men dwell, how far soever off, and however separated by wide oceans from those parts of the world which are already Christianized.

(2.) There has of late years been a very considerable pro-

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pagation of the gospel among the Heathen in the dominions of *Muscovy*. I have already observed the reformation which has lately been among those who are called *Christians* there: but I now speak of the Heathen. Great part of the vast dominions of the Emperor of Muscovy are gross Heathens. The greater part of Great Tartary, a Heathen country, has in later times been brought under the Muscovite government; and there have been of late great numbers who have renounced their Heathenism, and have embraced the Christian religion.

(3.) There has been lately a very considerable propagation of the Christian religion among the Heathen in the *East Indies;* particularly, many in *Malabar* have been brought over to the Christian Protestant religion, chiefly by the labours of certain missionaries sent thither to instruct them by the King of Denmark, who have brought over many Heathens to the Christian faith, and have set up schools among them, and a printing press to print Bibles and other books for their instruction, in their own language, with great success.

3. The last kind of success which I shall notice, is the *revival* of the power and practice of religion. And here I shall take notice of but two instances.

(1.) There has been not long since a remarkable revival of the power and practice of religion in *Germany*, through the endeavours of an eminent divine there, *August Herman Frank*, professor of divinity at Halle in Saxony. Being a person of eminent charity, the great work that God wrought by him, began with his setting on foot a charitable design. It began only with his placing an alms-box at his study door, into which some poor mites were thrown, whereby books were bought for the instruction of the poor. And God was pleased so wonderfully to smile on his design, and so to pour out a spirit of charity on that occasion, that he was enabled in a little time to erect public schools for the instruction of poor children, and an orphan-house for their supply and instruction. At last, near five hundred children were maintained and instructed in learning and piety by the charity of others; and the number continued to increase more and more for many years. This was accompanied with a wonderful reformation and revival of religion, and a spirit of piety, in the city and university of Halle; and thus it continued. Which also had great influence in many other places in Germany. Their example seemed remarkably to stir up multitudes to their imitation.

(2.) Another thing, which it would be ungrateful in us not to notice, is that remarkable pouring out of the Spirit of God which has been of late in this part of *New England*, of which we, in this town, have had such a share. But it is needless for me particularly to describe it, seeing *you* have so

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lately been eye-witnesses of it, and I hope multitudes are sensible of the benefit. Thus I have mentioned the more remarkable instances of the success which the gospel has lately had in the world.

IV. I proceed now to the last thing proposed to be considered, relating to the success of Christ's redemption during this space, *viz.* what is the *present state* of things now in the world, with regard to the church of Christ, and the success of his purchase. And this I would do, by showing how things are now, compared with the first times of the Reformation.—And, 1. I would show wherein the state of things is altered for the worse; and, 2. How it is altered for the better.

1. I would show wherein the state of things is altered from what it was in the beginning of the Reformation, for the *worse;* and it is so especially in these three respects.

(1.) The Reformed church is much *diminished.* The Reformation, in former times, was supposed to take place through one half of Christendom, excepting the Greek church; or that there were as many Protestants as Papists. But now it is not so; the Protestant church is much diminished. Heretofore there have been multitudes of Protestants in *France;* many famous Protestant churches were planted all over that country, who used to meet together in synods, and maintain a very regular discipline. The Protestant church of France was a great part of the glory of the Reformation. But now it is far otherwise: this church is all broken and scattered, and there are now but very few Protestant assemblies in all that kingdom. The Protestant interest is also greatly diminished in *Germany.* There were formerly several sovereign Protestant princes, whose successors are now Papists; as, particularly, the Elector Palatine, and the Elector of Saxony. The kingdom of *Bohemia* was formerly a Protestant kingdom, but is now in the hands of the Papists. *Hungary* was formerly a Protestant country; but the Protestants there have been greatly reduced, and in a great measure subdued, by persecutions. And the Protestant interest has no way of late remarkably gained ground of the church of Rome.

(2.) Another thing wherein the state of things is altered for the worse compared with the former times of the Reformation, is the prevailing of *licentiousness* in principles and opinions.—There is not now that spirit of orthodoxy which then prevailed; there is very little appearance of zeal for the mysterious and spiritual doctrines of Christianity; and they never were so held in contempt, as they are in the present age; and especially in England, the principal kingdom of the Reformation. In this kingdom, those principles on which the power of godliness depends, are in a great measure exploded, and Arianism, Socinianism, Arminianism, and Deism, prevail,

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and carry almost all before them. History gives no account of any age wherein there was so great an infidel apostacy of those who had been brought up under the light of the gospel; never was there such a disavowal of all revealed religion; never any age wherein there was so much scoffing at and ridiculing the gospel of Christ by those who have been brought up under the gospel-light.

(3.) Another thing wherein things are altered for the worse is, that there is much less of the prevalency of the power of *godliness*, than there was at the beginning of the Reformation. A glorious out-pouring of the Spirit of God accompanied the first Reformation, not only to convert multitudes in so short a time from Popery to the true religion, but to turn many to God and true godliness. But now there is an exceeding great decay of vital piety; yea, it seems to be despised, called *enthusiasm*, and *fanaticism*. Those who are truly religious, are commonly looked upon to be beside their right mind; and vice and profaneness dreadfully prevail, like a flood which threatens to bear down all before it.——But I proceed now to show,

2. In what respects things are altered for the *better* from what they were in the first Reformation.

(1.) The power and influence of the *Pope* is much diminished. Although, since the former times of the Reformation, he has gained ground in extent of dominion; yet he has lost in degree of influence. The vial which in the beginning of the Reformation was poured out on the throne of the beast, to the great diminishing of his power and authority in the world, has continued running ever since. The Pope, soon after the Reformation, became less regarded by the princes of Europe than he had been before; and so he has been since less and less. Many of the Popish princes themselves seem now to regard him very little more than they think will serve their own designs; of which there have been several remarkable proofs and instances of late.

(2.) There is far less *persecution* now than there was in the first times of the Reformation. Some parts of the Protestant church are at this day under persecution, and so probably will be till the day of the church's suffering and travail is at an end, which will not be till the fall of Antichrist. But it is now in no measure as it was heretofore. There does not seem to be the same *spirit* of persecution prevailing; it is become more out of fashion even among the Popish princes. The wickedness of the enemies of Christ, and the opposition against his cause, seem to run in another channel. The humour now is to despise and *laugh* at all religion; and there seems to be a spirit of indifferency about it. However, so far the

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state of things is better than it has been, that there is so much less of persecution.

3. There is a great increase of *learning*. In the dark times of Popery, before the Reformation, learning was so far decayed, that the world seemed to be over-run with barbarous ignorance. Their very priests were many of them grossly ignorant. Learning began to revive with the Reformation, owing very much to the art of printing, which was invented a little before this period. Since then, learning has increased more and more, and at this day is undoubtedly raised to a vastly greater height than ever it was before: and though no good use is made of it by the greater part of learned men, yet the increase of learning in itself is a thing to be rejoiced in, because it is a good, and, if duly applied, an excellent handmaid to divinity. It is a talent which, if God gives men a heart, affords them great advantage to do great things for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, and the good of the souls of men. That learning and knowledge should greatly increase before the glorious times, seems to be foretold, Dan. xii. 4. *But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.* And however little now learning is applied to the advancement of religion; yet we may hope that the days are approaching wherein God will make great use of it for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ.

God in his providence now seems to be acting over again the same part which he did a little before Christ came. When Christ came into the world, learning greatly prevailed; and yet wickedness never prevailed more than then. God was pleased to suffer human learning to come to such a height before he sent forth the gospel into the world, that the world might see the insufficiency of all their own wisdom for the obtaining the knowledge of God, without the gospel of Christ, and the teaching of his Spirit. When, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe. And when the gospel came to prevail first without the help of man's wisdom, then God was pleased to make use of learning as an handmaid. So now, learning is at a great height in the world, far beyond what it was in the age when Christ appeared; and now the world, by their learning and wisdom, do not know God; and they seem to wander in darkness, are miserably deluded, stumble and fall in matters of religion, as in midnight-darkness. Trusting to their learning, they grope in the day-time as in the night. Learned men are exceedingly divided in their opinions concerning the matters

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of religion, running into all manner of corrupt opinions, pernicious and foolish errors. They scorn to submit their reason to divine revelation, to believe any thing that is above their comprehension; and so being wise in their own eyes, they become fools, and even vain in their imaginations; they turn the truth of God into a lie, and their foolish hearts are darkened. See Rom. i. 21, &c.

But yet, when God has sufficiently shown men the insufficiency of human wisdom and learning for the purposes of religion, and when the appointed time comes for that glorious out-pouring of the Spirit of God, when he will himself by his own immediate influence enlighten men's minds; then may we hope that God will make use of the great increase of learning as an handmaid to religion, as a means of the glorious advancement of the kingdom of his Son. Then shall human learning be subservient to the understanding of the scriptures, and to a clear explanation and a glorious defence of the doctrines of Christianity. And there is no doubt, that God in his providence has of late given the world the art of printing, and such a great increase of learning, to prepare for what he designs to accomplish for his church in the approaching days of its prosperity. And thus the wealth of the wicked is laid up for the just, Prov. xiii. 22.

PART VI.

Improvement of past Events.

HAVING now shown how the work of redemption has been carried on from the fall of man to the present time, before I proceed any further, I would make some APPLICATION.

I. From what has been said, we may see great evidence of the truth of the Christian religion, and that *the scriptures are the word of God.* There are three arguments of this, which may be drawn from what has been said.

1. It may be argued from that violent and inveterate *opposition* there has always appeared of the wickedness of the world against this religion The religion that the church of God has professed from the first, has always been the same. Though the dispensations have been altered, yet the religion which the church has professed has always, as to its essentials, been the same. The church of God, from the beginning, has been one

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society. The Christian church is manifestly the same society continued, that was before Christ came; grafted on the same root, built on the same foundation. The revelation on which both have depended, is essentially the same: for as the Christian church is built on the holy scriptures, so was the Jewish church. Though now the scriptures are enlarged by the addition of the New Testament, still it is essentially the same revelation with that which was given in the Old Testament, only the subjects of divine revelation are now more clearly revealed in the New Testament than they were in the Old. The sum of both the Old Testament and New, is Christ and his redemption. The ground-work of the religion of the church of God, both before and since Christ has appeared, is the same great scheme of redemption by the Son of God. The church that was before the Israelitish church, was still the same society, and it was essentially the same religion that was professed and practised in it. Thus it was from Noah to Abraham, and thus it was before the flood; for *this* also was built on the foundation of those revelations of Christ which were given to Adam, and Enoch. So that the church of God has always been built on those divine revelations, and were always essentially the same, and they are summarily comprehended in the holy scriptures. Ever since Moses' time the church has been built on the scriptures themselves.

So that the opposition which has been made to the church of God in all ages, has always been against the same religion, and the same revelation. Now therefore the violent and perpetual opposition that has ever been made by the corruption and wickedness of mankind against this church, is a strong argument of the truth of this religion, and this revelation, upon which this church has always been built. Contraries are well argued one from another. We may well and safely argue, that a thing is good, according to the degree of opposition in which it stands to evil, or the degree in which evil opposes it, and is an enemy to it. Now it is evident by the things which you have heard concerning the church of Christ, and that holy religion of Jesus Christ which it has professed, that the wickedness of the world has had a perpetual hatred to it, and has made most violent opposition against it.

That the church of God has always met with great opposition in the world, none can deny. This is plain by profane history as far as that reaches; and before that, divine history gives us the same account. The church of God, its religion and worship, began to be opposed in the time of Cain and Abel; and was so when the earth was filled with violence in Noah's time. After this, how was the church opposed in Egypt! and how was Israel always hated by the nations round about, agreeable to Jer. xii. 9. *Mine heritage is unto me as a*

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speckled bird, the birds round about are against her. And after the Babylonish captivity, how was this church persecuted by Antiochus Epiphanes and others! How was Christ persecuted when he was on earth! and how were the apostles and other Christians persecuted by the Jews, before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans! How violent were that people against the church! and how dreadful was the opposition of the Heathen world against the Christian church after this before Constantine! How great was their spite against the true religion! And since that, how yet more violent, and spiteful, and cruel, has been the opposition of Antichrist against the church!

There is no other such instance of opposition. History gives no account of any other body of men that have been so hated, and so maliciously and insatiably pursued and persecuted, nor any thing like it. No other religion ever was so maligned age after age. The nations of other professions have enjoyed their religions in peace and quietness, however they have differed from their neighbours. One nation has worshipped one sort of gods, and others another, without molesting or disturbing one another about it. All the spite and opposition has been against this religion, which the church of Christ has professed. All other religions have seemed to show an implacable enmity to this; and men have seemed to have, from one age to another, such a spite against it, that they have seemed as though they could never satisfy their cruelty. They put their inventions upon the rack, to find out torments that should be cruel enough; and yet, after all, never seemed to be satisfied. Their thirst has never been satisfied with blood.

So that it is out of doubt, that this religion, and these scriptures, have always been malignantly opposed in the world. The only question that remains is, What it is that has made this opposition? whether or not it has been good or bad? whether it be the wickedness and corruption of the world, or not, that has done this? But of this there can be no greater doubt than that of the other, if we consider how causeless this cruelty has always been, who the opposers have been, and the manner in which they have opposed. The opposition has chiefly been from Heathenism and Popery; which are the fruits of the blindness, corruption, and wickedness of men, as the very Deists themselves confess. The light of nature shows, that the religion of *Heathens*, consisting in the worship of idols, and sacrificing their children to them, and in obscene and abominable rites and ceremonies, is wickedness. And the superstitions, idolatries, and usurpations of the church of *Rome*, are no less contrary to the light of nature. By this appears, that this opposition which has been made against the

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church of God, has been made by wicked men. And with regard to the opposition of the *Jews* in Christ's and the apostles' time, it was in a most corrupt time of that nation, when the people were generally become exceeding wicked, as some of the Jewish writers themselves, Josephus and others, who lived about that time, expressly declare. And that it has been mere wickedness that has made this opposition, is manifest from the *manner* of opposition; the extreme violence, injustice, and cruelty, with which the church of God has been treated. It seems to show the hand of malignant infernal spirits.

Now what reason can be assigned, why the corruption and wickedness of the world should so implacably set itself against this religion of Jesus Christ, and against the scriptures, but only that they are contrary to wickedness, and consequently are good and holy? Why should the enemies of Christ, for so many thousand years together, manifest such a mortal hatred of this religion, but only that it is the cause of God? If the scriptures be not the word of God, and the religion of the church of Christ be not the true religion, then it must follow, that it is a most wicked religion; nothing but a pack of lies and abominable delusions, invented by the enemies of God. And if so, it is not likely that the enemies of God, and the wickedness of the world, would have maintained such a perpetual and implacable enmity against it.

2. It is a great argument that the Christian church and its religion is from God, that it has been *upheld* hitherto through all opposition and dangers. That the church of God and the true religion, which has been so continually and violently opposed, with so many endeavours to overthrow it—and which has so often been brought to the brink of ruin, through the greatest part of six thousand years—has yet been upheld, most remarkably shows the hand of God in favour of the church. If duly considered, it will appear one of the greatest wonders and miracles that ever came to pass. There is nothing like it upon the face of the earth. There is no other society of men that has stood as the church has. As to the old world before the flood, that was overthrown by a deluge of waters; but yet the church of God was preserved. Satan's visible kingdom on earth was then once entirely overthrown; but the visible kingdom of Christ never has been overthrown. All those ancient human kingdoms and monarchies of which we read, are long since come to an end; the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Edomites, &c. The great empire of proud Babylon was overthrown by the Persians; then the Persian empire was overthrown by the Greeks; after this the Grecian empire was overthrown by the Romans; and finally, the Roman empire fell a sacrifice to various barbarous nations. Here is a remarkable fulfilment of the text, *The moth has eaten them up like a*

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garment, and the worm has eaten them like wool; but God's church remains.

Never were there so many and so potent endeavours to destroy any thing else, as there has been to destroy the church. Other kingdoms and societies of men, which have appeared to be ten times as strong as the church, have been destroyed with an hundredth part of the opposition which the church of God has met with: which shows, that it is God who has been its protector. For it is most plain, that it has not upheld itself by its own strength. For the most part, it has been a very weak society. The children of Israel were but a handful of people, in comparison of the many who often sought their overthrow. So in Christ's time, and in the beginning of the Christian church, they were but a remnant: whereas the whole multitude of the Jewish nation were against them. And so in the beginning of the Gentile church, they were but a small number in comparison with the Heathen, who sought their overthrow. In the dark times of Antichrist, before the Reformation, they were but a handful; and yet their enemies could not overthrow them. And commonly, the enemies of the church, have not only had the greatest number on their side, but they have had the strength in other respects. They have commonly had all the civil authority on their side. So in Egypt, the civil authority was for the Egyptians, and the church were only their slaves, and in their hands; and yet they could not overthrow them. And so it was in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, and Julian the apostate, the authority was all on the side of the persecutors, and the church was under their dominion; yet all their cruelty could not extirpate it. And for a great many ages, the civil authority was all on the side of Antichrist, and the church seemed to be in their hands.

And not only has the strength of its enemies been greater than that of the church, but, ordinarily the church has not used what strength they have had in their own defence, but have committed themselves wholly to God. In the time of the Jewish persecutions before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and of the Heathen persecutions before Constantine, the Christians did not pretend to make any forcible resistance to their Heathen persecutors. So it has been for the most part under the Popish persecutions; and yet they have never been able to overthrow the church of God; but it stands to this very day.

And this is still the more exceeding wonderful, if we consider how often the church has been brought to the brink of ruin, and the case seemed to be desperate. In the time of the old world, when wickedness so prevailed as that but one family was left, yet God wonderfully appeared, and overthrew the wicked world with a flood, and preserved his church. At

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the Red sea, when Pharaoh and his host thought they were quite sure of their prey, God appeared, destroyed them, and delivered his church. Under the tenth and last Heathen persecution, their persecutors boasted that now they had done the business for the Christians, and overthrown the Christian church; yet in the midst of their triumph, the Christian church rises out of the dust and prevails, and the Heathen empire totally falls before it. So when the Christian church seemed ready to be swallowed up by the Arian heresy, when Antichrist rose and prevailed, and all the world wondered after the beast; when the church for many hundred years was reduced to a small number, and the power of the world was engaged to destroy those little remnants; yet they could never fully accomplish their design, and at last God wonderfully revived his church by the Reformation, made it to stand as it were on its feet in the sight of its enemies, and raised it out of their reach. And when the Popish powers plotted the overthrow of the Reformed church, and seemed just about to bring their matters to a conclusion, then God wonderfully appeared for the deliverance of his church, as at the Revolution by King William. Presently after the darkest times, God has made his church most gloriously to flourish.

If such a preservation of the church of God, from the beginning of the world hitherto, attended with such circumstances, is not sufficient to shew a divine hand in favour of it, what can be devised that would be sufficient? But if this be from the divine hand, then God owns the church, and owns that revelation and those scriptures on which she is built; and so it will follow, that their religion is the true religion, or God's religion, and that the scriptures, which they make their rule, are his word.

3. We may draw this further argument for the divine authority of the scriptures from what has been said, *viz.* that God has *fulfilled* those things which are foretold in the scriptures.——I have already observed in general, as I went along, how the prophecies of scripture were fulfilled: I shall now single out but *two instances* of the fulfilment of scripture-prophecy.

(1.) One is in *preserving* his church from being ruined. I have just now shown what an evidence this is of the divine authority of the scriptures in itself considered; I now speak of it as a fulfilment of scripture-prophecy. This is abundantly foretold and promised in the scriptures; particularly in the text. There it is foretold, that other things shall fail, other kingdoms and monarchies, which set themselves in opposition, should come to nothing: *The moth should eat them up like a garment, and the worm should eat them like wool.* It is here foretold, that God's covenant-mercy to his church should

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continue for ever; and so it hath hitherto proved, though the church has passed through so many dangers. The same is promised, Isa. liv. 17. *No weapon that is formed against thee, shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn.* And again, Isa. xlix. 14, 15, 16. "But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, *yet I will not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me.*" The same is promised in Isa. lix. 21. lxiii. 1, 2. and Zech. xii. 2, 3. So Christ promised the same, when he says, *On this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* Now if this be not from God, and the scriptures be not the word of God, and the church of Christ built on the foundation of this word be not of God, how could the persons who foretold this, know it? for if the church were not of God, it was a very unlikely thing ever to come to pass. For they foretold great opposition and dangers, that other kingdoms should come to nought, and that the church should often be almost swallowed up; and yet that the church should remain. Now how could they foresee so unlikely a thing but by divine inspiration?

(2.) The other remarkable instance is, the *fulfilment* of scripture-prophecy, concerning *Antichrist.* The way that this Antichrist should arise, is foretold, *viz.* by the falling away of the Christian church into a corrupt state: 2 Thess. ii. 3. *For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.*——And it is prophesied, that this man of sin should set himself up in the temple or visible church of God, pretending to be vested with divine power, as head of the church, (ver. 4.) And all this is exactly come to pass in the church of Rome. Again it is intimated, that the rise of Antichrist should be *gradual,* (ver. 7.) *For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.* This also came to pass.——Again, it is prophesied of this mighty enemy of the Christian church, that he should be a great prince or monarch of the Roman empire: so he is represented in Daniel as a horn of the fourth beast, or fourth monarchy, as the angel himself explains it, (Daniel vii.) This also came to pass.——Yea it is prophesied, that the seat of this pretended vicar of God, and head of the church, should be the city of Rome itself. It is said expressly, that the spiritual whore, or false church, should have her seat on seven mountains or hills: Rev. xvii. 9. *The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth:* and (ver. 18.) *The woman which thou sawest, is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth;* which

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it is certain was at that time the city of Rome. This prophecy also has come to pass.

Further, it was prophesied, that this Antichrist should reign over peoples and multitudes, and nations, and tongues, Rev. xvii. 15; and that all the world should wonder after the beast, Rev. xiii. 3. This also was verified in the church of Rome. It was foretold that this Antichrist should be remarkable for the sin of pride, pretending to great things, and assuming very much to himself: (2 Thess. ii. 4.) *That he should exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.* So Rev. xiii. 5. *And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies.* Dan. vii. 8, 20, the *little horn* is said to have *a mouth speaking very great things*, and his look to be *more stout than his fellows.* This also was verified in the Pope, and the church of Rome.——It was also prophesied, that Antichrist should be an exceeding cruel persecutor, Dan. vii. 21. The same horn *made war with the saints, and prevailed against them:* Rev. xiii. 7. *And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them.* Rev. xvii. 6. *And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.* This also came to pass in the church of Rome.—It was foretold, that Antichrist should excel in craft and policy: Dan. vii. 8. *In this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man.* And ver. 20. *Even of that horn that had eyes.* This also marks the church of Rome.——It was foretold, that the kings of Christendom should be subject to Antichrist; Rev. xvii. 12, 13. *And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but received power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.* This also came to pass with respect to the Romish church. ——It was foretold, that he should perform pretended miracles and lying wonders: 2 Thess. ii. 9. *Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders.* Rev. xiii. 13, 14. *And he doth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth, in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast.* This also designates the church of Rome. Fire coming down from heaven seems to have reference to their excommunications, which were dreaded like fire from heaven.——It was foretold, that he should forbid to marry, and to abstain from meats: 1 Tim. iv. 3. *Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving.* This also is exactly fulfilled in the church of Rome.—— It was foretold, that he should be very rich, and arrive at a great degree of earthly splendour and glory: Rev. xvii. 4. *And the woman was arrayed in purple, and scarlet colour, and decked with*

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gold and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand. And so chap. xviii. 7, 12, 13, 16. What can more expressly describe the church of Rome?——It was foretold, that he should forbid any to buy or sell, but those that had his mark: Rev. xiii. 17. *And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.* This also is fulfilled in the church of Rome.——It was foretold, that he should sell the souls of men, Rev. xviii. 13, where, in enumerating the articles of his merchandise, *the souls of men* are specifically mentioned as one. Is not this also exactly fulfilled in the same church?——It was foretold, that Antichrist would not suffer the bodies of God's people to be buried: Rev. xi. 8, 9. *And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city,—and they—shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.* How literally has this come to pass with respect to the church of Rome!——I might mention many other things which were foretold of Antichrist, and show that they were fulfilled most exactly in the Pope and the church of Rome. How strong an argument is this, that the scriptures are the word of God!

II. From what has been said, we may learn what the spirit of true Christians is, viz. *a spirit of suffering.* Seeing God has so ordered it in his providence, that his church should for so long a time be in a suffering state, yea, often in a state of extreme suffering, we may conclude, that the spirit of the true church is a suffering spirit, otherwise God never would have ordered for it so much suffering; for doubtless God accommodates the state and circumstances of the church to the spirit that he has given her. No wonder therefore that Christ so much inculcated upon his disciples, that *they must deny themselves, and take up their cross if they would follow him.*

And what spirit has the church shown and exercised under her sufferings? She has actually, under those terrible persecutions through which she has passed, rather chosen to undergo those dreadful torments, and to sell all for the pearl of great price; to suffer all that her bitterest enemies could inflict, than to renounce Christ and his religion. History affords a great number of remarkable instances, sets in view a great cloud of witnesses. This abundantly confirms the necessity of possessing a spirit to sell all for Christ, to renounce our own ease, our own worldly profit, our honour, and our all, for *him*, and for the gospel.

Let us inquire, whether we are of such a spirit. How does it prove upon trial? Does it prove in fact that we are willing to deny ourselves, and renounce our own worldly interest, and to pass through the trials to which we are called in providence? Alas, how small are our trials, compared with

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those of many of our fellow Christians in former ages! and I would on this occasion apply that in Jer. xii. 5. *If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses?* If you have not been able to endure the light trials to which you have been called, how would you be able to endure the far greater trials to which the church has been called in former ages? Every true Christian has *the spirit of a martyr*, and would suffer as a martyr, if he were called to it in providence.

III. Hence we learn what great *reason* we have assuredly to expect the fulfilment of what yet *remains* to be fulfilled of things foretold in scripture. The scriptures foretel many great things yet to be fulfilled before the end of the world; but what great difficulties seem to be in the way? We seem at present to be very far from such a state as is foretold in the scriptures; but yet we have abundant reason to expect, that these things, however seemingly difficult, will be accomplished in their season. We see the faithfulness of God to his promises hitherto; how true he has been to his church, and how he has remembered his mercy from generation to generation. We may say concerning what God has done hitherto for his church, as Joshua said to the children of Israel, Joshua xxiii. 14. *That not one thing hath failed of all that the Lord our God hath spoken concerning his church;* but all things are hitherto come to pass agreeable to the divine prediction. This should strengthen our faith in those promises, and encourage us, and stir us up to earnest prayer to God for the accomplishment of the great and glorious things which yet remain to be fulfilled.

PART VII.

The Success of Redemption from the present Time to the Fall of Antichrist.

I come now to show how the success of Christ's redemption will be carried on from the present time, till Antichrist is fallen, and Satan's visible kingdom on earth is destroyed.—With respect to this space of time, we have nothing to guide us but the prophecies of scripture. Through most of the time from the fall of man to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, we had scripture-history to guide us; and from thence to the present time we had prophecy, together with the

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accomplishment of it in providence, as related in human histories. But henceforward we have *prophecy alone* to guide us. And here I would pass by those things that are only conjectured, or that are surmised by some from those prophecies which are doubtful in their interpretation, and shall insist only on those things which are more evident.

We know not what particular events are to come to pass before that glorious work of God's spirit begins, by which Satan's kingdom is to be overthrown. By the consent of most divines, there are but few things, if any at all, foretold to be accomplished before the *beginning* of that glorious work of God. But some think that the slaying of the witnesses, (Rev. xi. 7, 8,) is not yet accomplished; and there is a difference of opinion with respect to the pouring out of the seven vials, (Rev. xvi.) how many are *already*, or how many *remain* to be poured out. A late expositor, indeed, whom I have before mentioned, seems to make it evident, that all are already poured out but two, *viz.* the *sixth* on the river Euphrates, and the *seventh* into the air. I will not now stand to inquire, what is intended by the pouring out of the sixth vial on the river Euphrates, that the way of the kings of the east may be prepared; but would only say, that it seems to be something *immediately preparatory* to the destruction of spiritual Babylon, as the drying up of the river Euphrates, which ran through the midst of old Babylon, was what prepared the way of the kings of the Medes and Persians, (the kings of the east,) to come in under the walls, and destroy that city.

But whatever this be, it does not appear that it is any thing which shall be accomplished before that work of God's spirit is *begun*, by which, as it goes on, Satan's visible kingdom on earth shall be utterly overthrown. And therefore I would proceed directly to consider what the scripture reveals concerning the work of God itself, by which he will bring about this great event, as being the next thing to be accomplished that we are certain of from the prophecies of scripture.

I. I would observe some things *in general* concerning it.

1. We have all reason to conclude from the scriptures, that just before this work of God begins, it will be *a very dark time* with respect to the interests of religion in the world. It has been so before preceding glorious revivals of religion; when Christ came, it was an exceeding degenerate time among the Jews: and so it was a very dark time before the Reformation. And not only so, but it seems to be foretold in scripture, that it shall be a time of but little religion, when Christ shall come to set up his kingdom in the world. Thus when Christ spake of his coming, to encourage his elect, who cry to him day

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and night, in Luke xviii. 8, he adds, *Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?* Which seems to denote a great prevalency of infidelity just before Christ's coming to avenge his suffering church.—Though Christ's coming at the last judgment is not here to be excluded, yet there seems to be a special respect to his coming to deliver his church from their long-continued suffering, persecuted state, which is accomplished only at his coming at the destruction of Antichrist. Then will be accomplished the following passages, Rev. vi. 10. *How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* and Rev. xviii. 20. *Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her.*

It is *now* a very dark time with respect to the interests of religion, wherein there is but a little faith, and a great prevailing of infidelity on the earth. There is now a remarkable fulfilment of that in 2 Pet. iii. 3. *Knowing this, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts.* And so Jude, 17, 18. "But beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts." Whether the times shall be any darker still, or how much darker, before the beginning of this glorious work of God, we cannot tell.

2. There is no reason from the word of God to think any other, than that this great work of God, will be wrought, though very swiftly, yet *gradually*. As the children of Israel were *gradually* brought out of the Babylonish captivity, first one company, and then another, and *gradually* rebuilt their city and temple; and as the Heathen Roman empire was destroyed by a *gradual*, though a very swift prevalency of the gospel; so, though there are many things which seem to hold forth that the work of God would be exceeding swift,—and many great and wonderful events should very suddenly be brought to pass, and some great parts of Satan's visible kingdom should have a very sudden fall,—yet all will not be accomplished at once, as by some great miracle, like the resurrection of the dead. But this work will be accomplished by *means*, by the preaching of the gospel, and the use of the ordinary means of grace, and so shall be *gradually* brought to pass. Some shall be converted, and be the means of others conversion. God's spirit shall be poured out first to raise up instruments, and then those instruments shall be used with success. And doubtless one nation shall be enlightened and converted, and one false religion and false way of worship exploded, after another. By the representation in Dan. ii. 3, 4.

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the stone cut out of the mountain without hands *gradually* grows. So Christ teaches us, that the kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard-seed, Matt. xiii. 31, 32, and like leaven hid in three measures of meal, ver. 33. The same representation we have in Mark iv. 26, 27, 28, and in the vision of the waters of the sanctuary, Ezek. xlvii.——The scriptures hold forth that there should be several successive great and glorious events by which this glorious work should be accomplished. The angel, speaking to the prophet Daniel of those glorious times, mentions two glorious periods, at the end of which glorious things shall be accomplished: Dan. xii. 11. *And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.* But then he adds in the next verse, *Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days;* intimating, that something very glorious should be accomplished at the end of the former period, but something much more glorious at the end of the latter.

II. I now proceed to show *how* this glorious work shall be accomplished.

1. The Spirit of God shall be gloriously poured out for the wonderful *revival and propagation* of religion. This great work shall be accomplished, not by the authority of princes, nor by the wisdom of learned men, but by God's Holy Spirit: Zech. iv. 6, 7. *Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain, and he shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.* So the prophet Ezekiel, speaking of this great work of God, says, chap. xxxix. 29, *Neither will I hide my face any more from them; for I have poured out my Spirit on the house of Israel, saith the Lord God.* We know not where this pouring out of the Spirit shall begin, or whether in many places at once; or whether, what hath already taken place, be not some forerunner and beginning of it.

This pouring out of the Spirit of God, when it is begun, shall soon bring great multitudes to forsake that vice and wickedness which now so generally prevails; and shall cause that vital religion, which is now so despised and laughed at in the world, to revive. The work of conversion shall break forth, and go on in such a manner as never has been hitherto; agreeable to Isa. xliv. 3, 4, 5.——God, by pouring out his Holy Spirit, will furnish men to be glorious instruments of carrying on this work; will fill them with knowledge and wisdom, and fervent zeal for the promoting the kingdom of Christ, and the salvation of souls, and propagating the gospel in the world. The gospel shall begin to be preached with

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abundantly greater clearness and power than had heretofore been. This great work of God shall be brought to pass by the preaching of the gospel, as is represented in Rev. xiv. 6, 7, 8; that before Babylon falls, the gospel shall be powerfully preached and propagated in the world.

This was typified of old by the sounding of the silver trumpets in Israel in the beginning of their jubilee: Lev. xxv. 9. *Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month: on the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.* The glorious times which are approaching, are the church's jubilee, which shall be introduced by the sounding of the silver trumpet of the gospel, as is foretold in Isa. xxvii. 13. *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts of the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.* And there shall be a glorious pouring out of the Spirit with this clear and powerful preaching of the gospel, to make it successful for reviving those holy doctrines of religion which are now chiefly ridiculed in the world, and turning many from heresy, from Popery, and from other false religions; and also for turning many from their vice and profaneness, and for bringing vast multitudes savingly home to Christ.

The work of conversion shall go on in a wonderful manner, and spread more and more. Many shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, one multitude after another continually, as in Isa. lx. 4, 5. *Lift up thine eyes round about, and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee; thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together.* And so ver. 8. *Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?* And as the gospel shall be preached to every tongue, and kindred, and nation, and people, before the fall of Antichrist; so we may suppose, that it will be gloriously successful to bring in multitudes from every nation; and shall spread more and more with wonderful swiftness, (see Isa. lxvi. 7—9.)

2. This pouring out of the Spirit of God will not affect the overthrow of Satan's visible kingdom, till there has first been a violent and *mighty opposition* made. In this the scripture is plain, that when Christ is thus gloriously coming forth, when the destruction of Antichrist is ready at hand, and Satan's kingdom begins to totter, the powers of the kingdom of darkness will rise up, and mightily exert themselves. Thus, after the pouring out of the sixth vial, which was to dry up the river Euphrates, to prepare the way for the destruction of spiritual Babylon, (Rev. xvi.) the powers of hell will be

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mightily alarmed, and will stir up themselves to oppose the kingdom of Christ, before the seventh vial shall be poured out, which shall give them a final and complete overthrow. The beloved disciple informs us, (ver. 13, 14,) that *three unclean spirits like frogs shall go forth unto the kings of the earth, to gather them together to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.* This seems to be the last and greatest effort of Satan to save his kingdom from being overthrown; though, perhaps, he may make as great towards the end of the world to regain it.

When the Spirit begins to be so gloriously poured forth, when the devil sees such multitudes flocking to Christ in one nation and another, when the foundations and pillars of his kingdom are ready to come to swift and sudden destruction, all hell will be greatly alarmed. Satan has ever had a dread of having his kingdom overthrown, and has been doing great works to prevent it, especially since the day of Constantine the Great. To this end he set up those mighty kingdoms of Antichrist and Mahomet, and brought in all the heresies, superstitions, and corrupt opinions in the world. But when he sees all begin to fail, it will rouse him exceedingly. If Satan of old dreaded being cast out of the Roman empire, how much more does he dread being cast out of the whole world!

It seems, in this last great opposition, all the forces of Antichrist, and Mahometanism, and Heathenism, will be united; all the forces of Satan's visible kingdom through the whole world of mankind. And therefore it is said, that *spirits of devils shall go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them together to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.* And these spirits are said to come out of the mouth of the *dragon*, and out of the mouth of the *beast*, and out of the mouth of the *false prophet*; i. e. there shall be the spirit of Popery, the spirit of Mahometanism, and the spirit of Heathenism all united. By the beast is meant Antichrist; by the dragon, in this book, is commonly meant the devil, as he reigns over his Heathen kingdom; by the false prophet, is sometimes meant the Pope and his clergy; but here an eye seems to be had to Mahomet, whom his followers call the great prophet of God. This will be, as it were, the dying struggles of the old serpent; a battle wherein he will fight as one that is almost desperate.

We know not particularly in what manner this opposition shall be made. It is represented as a battle; it is called *the battle of the great day of God Almighty.* There will be some way or other a mighty struggle between Satan's kingdom and the church, and probably in all ways of opposition that can be; and doubtless great opposition by external force. The

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princes of the world who are on the devil's side shall join hand in hand; for it is said, *The kings of the earth are gathered together to battle*, Rev. xix. 19. And probably there will be great opposition by subtle disputers and carnal reasoning, persecution, virulent reproaches, craft, and subtilty. The devil now doubtless will ply his skill, as well as strength, to the utmost; and those who belong to his kingdom, will every where be stirred up, and engaged to make an united violent opposition against this holy religion, which they see prevailing so mightily in the world.——But,

3. Christ and his church shall in this battle obtain a complete and *entire victory* over their enemies. They shall be totally routed and overthrown in this their last effort. When the powers of hell and earth are thus gathered together against Christ, and his armies shall come forth against them by his word and Spirit, in how august and glorious a manner is this advance of Christ with his church described, Rev. xix. 11, &c. And to represent how great the victory they should obtain, and how mighty the overthrow of their enemies, it is said, (ver. 17, 18,) that *all the fowls of heaven are called together, to eat the great supper given them, of the flesh of kings, and captains, and mighty men*, &c.; and then, in the following verses, we have a distinct account of the victory and overthrow.

In this victory the seventh vial shall be poured out. It is said, Rev. xvi. 16, of the great army that should be gathered together against Christ:—"And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue, *Armageddon*;" then it is said, "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done." Now the business is done for Satan and his adherents. When this victory is obtained, all is in effect done. Satan's last and greatest opposition is conquered; all his measures are defeated; the pillars of his kingdom broken asunder, and will fall of course. The devil is utterly baffled and confounded, and knows not what else to do. He now sees his Antichristian, Mahometan, and Heathenish kingdoms through the world, all tumbling down. He and his most powerful instruments are taken captive. Now that is in effect done, for which the church of God had been so long waiting and hoping, and so earnestly crying to God, saying, *How long, O Lord, holy and true*, &c.

The angel who set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the earth, lift up his hand to heaven, and swore by *him that liveth for ever and ever*, &c. that when the seventh angel should come to sound, the time should be no longer.—And now the time is come; now the seventh trumpet sounds, and the seventh vial is poured out, both together; intimating,

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that now all is finished as to the overthrow of Satan's visible kingdom on earth. This victory shall be by far the greatest that ever was obtained over Satan and his adherents. By this blow, with which the stone cut out of the mountain without hands shall strike the image of gold and silver, and brass, and iron, and clay, it shall all be broken to pieces. This will be a finishing blow to the image, so that it shall become as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor.

In this victory will be a most glorious display of divine power. Christ shall therein appear in the character of King of kings, and Lord of lords, as in Rev. xix. 16. Now Christ shall dash his enemies, even the strongest and proudest of them, in pieces; as a potter's vessel shall they be broken to shivers. —Then shall strength be shown out of weakness, and Christ shall cause his church to thresh the mountains, as in Isa. xli. 15. *Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing-instrument having teeth; thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff.* And then shall be fulfilled Isa. xlii. 13—15.

III. Consequent on this victory, Satan's visible kingdom on earth shall be *destroyed.* When Satan is conquered in this last battle, the church of Christ will have easy work of it; as when Joshua and the children of Israel had obtained that great victory over the five kings of the Amorites. When God sent great hail-stones on their enemies, they had easy work of subduing the cities and country to which they belonged. So it was also after the other great battle that Joshua had with a great multitude at the waters of Merom. After this glorious victory of Christ and his church over their enemies, the chief powers of Satan's kingdom, they shall destroy that kingdom in all those cities and countries to which they belonged. After this the word of God shall have a speedy and swift progress through the earth; as it is said, that on the pouring out of the seventh vial, *the cities of the nations fell, and every island fled away, and the mountains were not found,* Rev. xvi. 19, 20.—When once the stone cut out of the mountain without hands had broken the image in pieces, it was easy to abolish all the remains of it. The very wind will carry it away as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor. Because Satan's visible kingdom on earth shall now be destroyed, therefore it is said, that the seventh vial by which this shall be done, shall be poured out into the air; which is represented in scripture as the special seat of his kingdom; for he is called *the prince of the power of the air,* Eph. ii. 2. Now is come the time for punishing leviathan, that piercing serpent, of which we read in Isa. xxvii. 1. "In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword, shall punish leviathan, the piercing serpent,

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even leviathan, that crooked serpent, and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea."

Concerning this overthrow of Satan's visible kingdom on earth, I would show wherein it will chiefly consist, with its extent and universality.

1. I would show wherein this overthrow of Satan's kingdom will chiefly consist. I shall mention the particular things in which it will consist, without pretending to determine in what order they shall come to pass, or which shall be accomplished first, or whether they shall be accomplished together.

(1.) *Heresies, infidelity,* and *superstition,* among those who have been brought up under the light of the gospel, will then be abolished; and particularly Deism, which is now so bold and *confident in infidelity,* shall be driven away, and vanish to nothing. All shall agree in the same great and important doctrines of the gospel; Zech. xiv. 9. *And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.* Then shall be abolished all superstitious modes of worship, and all shall cordially agree in worshipping God in his own way; Jer. xxxii. 39. *And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them.*

(2.) The kingdom of *Antichrist* shall be utterly overthrown. His dominion has been much brought down already by the vial poured out on his throne in the Reformation; but then it shall be utterly destroyed. Then shall be proclaimed, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen." When the seventh angel sounds, "the time, times, and half a time, shall be out; and the time shall be no longer." Then shall be accomplished concerning Antichrist the things which are written (Rev. xviii.) of the spiritual Babylon, the idolatrous Roman government, that has for so many ages been the great enemy of the Christian church, first under Heathenism, then under Popery,—that proud city which lifted herself up to heaven, in her pride and haughtiness; that cruel, bloody city, shall come down to the ground. Then shall that be fulfilled, Isa. xxvi. 5. "For he bringeth down them that dwell on high, the lofty city he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground, he bringeth it even to the dust." She shall be thrown down with violence, like a great mill-stone cast into the sea, and shall be found no more at all, and shall become an habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. Now shall she be stripped of all her glory, and riches, and ornaments, and shall be cast out as an abominable branch, and shall be trodden down as the mire of the streets. All her policy and craft, in which she so abounded,

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shall not save her. All the strength and wisdom of this great whore shall fail her, and there shall be none to help her. The kings of the earth, who before gave their power and strength to the beast, shall now hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire, Rev. xvii. 16.

(3.) Satan's *Mahometan* kingdom shall be utterly overthrown. The locusts and horsemen in the 9th of Revelation, have their appointed and limited time set them there, and the false prophet shall be taken and destroyed. And then—though Mahometanism has been so vastly propagated in the world, and is upheld by such a great empire—this smoke, which has ascended out of the bottomless pit, shall be utterly scattered before the light of that glorious day, and the Mahometan empire shall fall at the sound of the great trumpet which shall then be blown.

(4.) *Jewish infidelity* shall then be overthrown. However obstinate they have been now for above seventeen hundred years in their rejection of Christ, and however rare have been the instances of individual conversions, ever since the destruction of Jerusalem—but they have, against the plain teachings of their own prophets, continued to approve of the cruelty of their forefathers in crucifying Christ—yet, when this day comes, the thick vail that blinds their eyes shall be removed, 2 Cor. iii. 16, and divine grace shall melt and renew their hard hearts, "and they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness as one that is in bitterness for his first-born," Zech. xii. 10, &c. And then shall the house of Israel be saved: the Jews in all their dispersions shall cast away their old infidelity, and shall have their hearts wonderfully changed, and abhor themselves for their past unbelief and obstinacy. They shall flow together to the blessed Jesus, penitently, humbly, and joyfully owning him as their glorious king and only Saviour, and shall with all their hearts, as with one heart and voice, declare his praises unto other nations.

Nothing is more certainly foretold than this national conversion of the Jews, in Rom. xi. There are also many passages of the Old Testament which cannot be interpreted in any other sense, which I cannot now stand to mention. Besides the prophecies of the calling of the Jews, we have a remarkable providential seal of the fulfilment of this great event, by a kind of continual miracle, *viz.* their being preserved a distinct nation in such a dispersed condition for above sixteen hundred years. The world affords nothing else like it. There is undoubtedly a remarkable hand of providence in it. When they shall be called, that ancient people, who alone

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were God's people for so long a time, shall be his people again, never to be rejected more. They shall then be gathered into one fold together with the Gentiles; and so also shall the remains of the ten tribes, wherever they be, and though they have been rejected much longer than the Jews, be brought in with their brethren. The prophecies of Hosea especially seem to hold this forth, that in the future glorious times of the church, both Judah and Ephraim, or Judah and the ten tribes, shall be brought in together, and shall be united as one people, as they formerly were under David and Solomon; (Hos. i. 11, &c.)—Though we do not know the time in which this conversion of Israel will come to pass; yet thus much we may determine by scripture, that it will be before the glory of the Gentile part of the church shall be fully accomplished; because it is said, that their coming in shall be life from the dead to the Gentiles, (Rom. xi. 12—15.)

(5.) Then shall also Satan's *Heathenish* kingdom be overthrown. Gross Heathenism now possesses a great part of the earth, and there are supposed to be more Heathens now in the world, than of all other professions taken together. But then the Heathen nations shall be enlightened with the glorious gospel. There will be a wonderful spirit of pity towards them, and zeal for their instruction and conversion put into multitudes, and many shall go forth and carry the gospel unto them. Then shall the joyful sound be heard among them, and the Sun of righteousness shall arise with his glorious light shining on those vast regions of the earth that have been covered with Heathenish darkness for many thousand years. Many of them doubtless ever since the times of Moses and Abraham, have lain thus in a miserable condition, under the cruel tyranny of the devil, who has all this while blinded and befooled them, domineered over them, and made a prey of them. Now the glad tidings of the gospel shall sound there, and they shall be brought out of darkness into marvellous light.

It is promised, that Heathenism shall thus be destroyed in many places. God has said, That the gods that have not made these heavens and this earth, shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens, Jer. x. 11, and that he will utterly abolish idols, Isa. ii. 18.——Then shall the many nations of Africa, who now seem to be in a state but little above the beasts, and in many respects much below them, be visited with glorious light, and delivered from all their darkness, and shall become a civil, Christian, understanding, and holy people.—Then shall the vast continent of America, which now in great part is covered with barbarous ignorance and cruelty, be every where covered with glorious gospel-light and Christian love; and instead of worshipping the devil as now they

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do, they shall serve God, and praises shall be sung every where to the Lord Jesus Christ, the blessed Saviour of the world. So we may expect it will be in that great and populous part of the world, the East Indies, which are now mostly inhabited by the worshippers of the devil. Then the kingdom of Christ will be established in those continents which have been more lately discovered towards the north and south poles, where men differ very little from the wild beasts, except in impiety. The same will be the case with respect to those countries which have never yet been discovered. Thus will be gloriously fulfilled, Isa. xxxv. 1. *The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them: and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.* (See also verse 6, 7.)

2. Having thus shown wherein this overthrow of Satan's kingdom will consist, I come now to observe its *universal extent.* The visible kingdom of Satan shall be overthrown, and the kingdom of Christ set up on the ruins of it, every where throughout the whole habitable globe. Now shall the promise made to Abraham be fulfilled, That in him and in his seed *all the families of the earth shall be blessed;* and Christ now shall become *the desire of all nations,* agreeable to Haggai ii. 7.—Now the kingdom of Christ shall in the most strict and literal sense be extended to all nations, and the whole earth. There are many passages of scripture that can be understood in no other sense. What can be more universal than Isa. xi. 9. *For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.* As much as to say, As there is no part of the channel or cavity of the sea, but what is covered with water; so there shall be no part of the world of mankind but what shall be covered with the knowledge of God. So it is foretold in Isa. lxv. 22, that *all the ends of the earth* shall look to Christ, and be saved. And to show that the words are to be understood in the most universal sense, it is said in the next verse, "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear."—So the most universal expression is used, Dan. vii. 27. "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High God."

When the devil was cast out of the Roman empire, because that was the highest and principal part of the world, and the other nations that were left were low and mean in comparison, it was represented as Satan's being cast out of heaven to the earth, Rev. xii. 9; but it is represented that he shall be cast out of the earth too, and shut up in hell, Rev. xx. 1, 2, 3.—This is the greatest revolution by far that ever came to pass: therefore it is said in Rev. xvi. 17, 18, That on the pouring

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out of the seventh vial, there was *a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great.* And this is the third great dispensation of providence which is in scripture compared to Christ's coming to judgment, Rev. xvi. 15. There, after the sixth vial, and after the devil's armies were gathered together to their great battle, and just before Christ's glorious victory over them, it is said, "Behold, I come quickly; blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments." So it is called *Christ's coming*, 2 Thess. ii. 8. Speaking of Antichrist it is said, "And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." See also Dan. vii. 13, 14, where Christ's coming to set up his kingdom on earth, and to destroy Antichrist, is called *coming with clouds of heaven.* And this is more like Christ's last coming to judgment, than any of the preceding dispensations which are so called. The dispensation is so much greater and more universal, and so more like the day of judgment, which respects the whole world. The great spiritual resurrection of the church of God accompanying it, resembles the general resurrection at the end of the world more than any other. (See Rev. xx. 4.)

Terrible judgments and fearful destruction shall now be executed on God's enemies. There will doubtless at the introducing of this dispensation be a visible and awful hand of God against blasphemers, Deists, obstinate heretics, and other enemies of Christ, terribly destroying them, with remarkable tokens of wrath and vengeance. More especially will this dispensation be attended with terrible judgments on Antichrist; the cruel persecutors who belong to the church of Rome, shall in a most awful manner be destroyed; which is compared to a casting of Antichrist into the burning flame, Dan. vii. 11, and to casting him alive into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, Rev. xix. 20.

Then shall this cruel persecuting church suffer those judgments from God, which shall be far more dreadful than her persecutions of the saints, agreeable to Rev. xviii. 6, 7.——The judgments which God shall execute on the enemies of the church, are so great, that they are compared to God's sending great hail-stones from heaven upon them, every one of the weight of a talent, as it is said on the pouring out of the seventh vial, Rev. xvi. 21. "And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God, because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exeeeding great." And now shall be that treading of the wine-press spoken of, Rev. xiv. 19, 20.

This shall put an end to the church's suffering state, and shall be attended with their glorious and joyful praises. The

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church's afflicted state has been continued, excepting some short intermissions, from the resurrection of Christ to this time; but now shall a final end be put to her suffering state. Indeed after this, near the end of the world, the church shall be greatly threatened; but it is said, it shall be but for *a little season*, Rev. xx. 3: for as the times of the church's rest have been but short, before the long day of her afflictions are at an end; so whatever affliction she may suffer after this, will be very short. In every other respect, the day of the church's afflictions and persecution shall now come to a final end. The scriptures, in many places, speak of this time as the end of the suffering state of the church. So Isa. li. 22. "Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury, thou shalt no more drink it again." Then shall be proclaimed to the church, Isa. xl. 1, 2, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." Also Isa. liv. 8, 9, and lx. 20, belong to this time. "The Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." And so Zeph. iii. 15. "The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more."

The time before this had been the church's sowing-time, wherein she sowed in tears and in blood; but now is her harvest, wherein she will come again rejoicing, bringing her sheaves with her. Now the time of travail of the woman clothed with the sun is at an end; now she hath brought forth her son: for this glorious setting up of the kingdom of Christ through the world, is what the church had been in travail for, with such terrible pangs, for so many ages: Isa. xxvi. 17.—"Like as a woman with child that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O Lord." (See Isa. lx. 20, and lxi. 10, 11.) And now the church shall forget her sorrow, since a man-child is born into the world: now succeed her joyful praise and triumph. Her praises shall then go up to God from all parts of the earth, (as Isa. xlii. 10—12;) and praise shall not only fill the earth, but also heaven. The church on earth, and the church in heaven, shall both gloriously rejoice and praise God, as with one heart, on that occasion. Without doubt it will be a time of very distinguished joy and praise among the holy prophets and apostles, and the other saints in heaven: Rev. xviii. 20. "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her." See how universal these praises will be in Isa. xliv. 23. "Sing,

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O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel." See what joyful praises are sung to God on this occasion by the universal church in heaven and earth, in the beginning of the 19th chapter of Revelation.

This dispensation is above all preceding ones like Christ's coming to judgment, in that it so puts an end to the former state of the world, and introduces the everlasting kingdom of Christ. Now Satan's visible kingdom shall be overthrown, after it had stood ever since the building of Babel; the old heavens and the old earth shall in a greater measure pass away, and the new heavens and new earth be set up in a far more glorious manner, than ever before.——Thus I have shown how the success of Christ's purchase has been carried on through the times of the afflicted state of the Christian church, from Christ's resurrection, till Antichrist is fallen, and Satan's visible kingdom on earth is overthrown.

PART VIII.

The Success of Redemption through that space wherein the Christian church shall, for the most part, be in a state of Peace and Prosperity.

In order to describe this part, I would speak, *first*, of the prosperous state of the church through the greatest part of this period; and, *secondly*, of the great apostacy there shall be towards the close of it.

I. I would speak of the *prosperous state* of the church through the greater part of this period. And in the general, I would observe two things:

1. That this is most properly the time of the kingdom of *heaven upon earth*. Though the kingdom of heaven was in a degree set up soon after Christ's resurrection, and in a further degree in the time of Constantine; and though the Christian church in all ages of it is called *the kingdom of heaven*; yet this is the principal time of the kingdom of heaven upon earth, the time principally intended by the prophecies of Daniel whence the Jews took the name of *the kingdom of heaven*.

2. Now is the principal fulfilment of all the prophecies of the Old Testament which speak of the glorious times of the

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gospel in the latter days. Though there has been a glorious fulfilment of those prophecies already, in the times of the apostles, and of Constantine; yet the expressions are too high to suit any other time entirely, but that which is to succeed the fall of Antichrist. This is most properly the glorious day of the gospel. Other times are only forerunners and preparatory to this: those were the seed-time, but this is the harvest. But more particularly,

(1.) It will be a time of great light and *knowledge*. The present are days of darkness, in comparison of those days.—The light of that glorious time shall be so great, that it is represented as though there should then be no night, but only day; no evening nor darkness. So Zech. xiv. 6, 7. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark. But it shall be one day, which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening-time it shall be light."——It is further represented, as though God would then give such light to his church, that it should so much exceed the glory of the light of the sun and moon, that they should be ashamed: Isa. xxiv. 23. "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously."

There is a kind of vail now cast over the greater part of the world, which keeps them in darkness: but then this vail shall be destroyed: Isa. xxv. 7. "And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations." Then all countries and nations, even those which are now most ignorant, shall be full of light and knowledge. Great knowledge shall prevail every where. It may be hoped, that then many of the Negroes and Indians will be divines, and that excellent books will be published in Africa, in Ethiopia, in Tartary, and other now the most barbarous countries; and not only learned men, but others of more ordinary education, shall then be very knowing in religion: Isa. xxxii. 3, 4. "The eyes of them that see, shall not be dim; and the ears of them that hear, shall hearken. The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge." Knowledge then shall be very universal among all sorts of persons; Jer. xxxi. 34. "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them."

There shall then be a wonderful unravelling of the difficulties in the doctrines of religion, and clearing up of seeming inconsistencies: "So crooked things shall be made straight, and rough places shall be made plain, and darkness shall become light before God's people." Difficulties in scripture

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shall then be cleared up, and wonderful things shall be discovered in the word of God, which were never discovered before. The great discovery of those things in religion which had been before kept hid, seems to be compared to removing the vail, and discovering the ark of the testimony to the people, which before used to be kept in the secret part of the temple, and was never seen by them. Thus, at the sounding of the seventh angel, when it is proclaimed, "that the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ;" it is added, that "the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." So great shall be the increase of knowledge in this time, that heaven shall be as it were opened to the church of God on earth.

(2.) It shall be a time of great *holiness*. Now vital religion shall every where prevail and reign. Religion shall not be an empty profession, as it now mostly is, but holiness of heart and life shall abundantly prevail. Those times shall be an exception from what Christ says of the ordinary state of the church, *viz.* that there shall be *but few saved;* for now holiness shall become general: Isa. lx. 21. *Thy people also shall be all righteous.* Not that there will be none remaining in a Christless condition; but that visible wickedness shall be suppressed every where, and true holiness shall become general, though not universal. It shall be a wonderful time, not only for the multitude of godly men, but for eminency of grace: Isa. lxv. 20. "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old, but the sinner being an hundred years old, shall be accursed." Zech. xii. 8. "He that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them." And holiness shall then be as it were inscribed on every thing, on all men's common business and employments, and the common utensils of life; all shall be dedicated to God, and applied to holy purposes; every thing shall then be done to the glory of God: Isa. xxiii. 18. *And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord.* (And so Zech. xiv. 20, 21.)——And as God's people then shall be eminent in holiness of heart, so they shall be also in holiness of life and practice.

(3.) It shall be a time wherein religion shall in every respect be *uppermost* in the world. It shall be had in great esteem and honour. The saints have hitherto for the most part been kept under, and wicked men have governed. But now they will be uppermost. The kingdom shall be given into the hands of the saints of the *Most High God,* Dan. vii. 27. And *they shall reign on earth,* Rev. v. 10. They shall

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live and *reign with Christ a thousand years*, Rev. xx. 4. In that day, such persons as are eminent for true piety and religion, shall be chiefly promoted to places of trust and authority. Vital religion shall then take possession of kings' palaces and thrones; and those who are in highest advancement shall be holy men: Isa. xlix. 23. *And kings shall be thy nursing-fathers, and their queens thy nursing-mothers.* Kings shall employ all their power, and glory, and riches, for the advancement of the honour and glory of Christ, and the good of his church: Isa. lx. 16. "Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breasts of kings." And the great men of the world, and the rich merchants, and others who have great wealth and influence, shall devote all to Christ and his church: Psalm xlv. 12. "The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift, even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour."

(4.) Those will be times of *great peace and love.* There shall then be universal peace and a good understanding among the nations of the world, instead of confusion, wars, and bloodshed. Isa. ii. 4. "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." It is represented as if all instruments of war should be destroyed, having become useless; Psal. xlvi. 9. "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth: he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire." (See also Zech. ix. 10.) Then shall all nations dwell quietly and safely, without fear of any enemy. Isa. xxxii. 18. "And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places." (Also Zech. viii. 10, 11.)

Then shall malice, and envy, and wrath, and revenge, be suppressed every where; and peace and love shall prevail between one man and another; which is most elegantly set forth in Isa. xi. 6—10. Then shall there be peace and love between rulers and ruled. Rulers shall love their people, and with all their might seek their best good; and the people shall love their rulers, shall joyfully submit to them, and give them that honour which is their due. So shall there be happy love between ministers and their people: Mal. iv. 6. "And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers." Then shall flourish in an eminent manner those Christian virtues of meekness, forgiveness, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, and brotherly kindness, those excellent fruits of the Spirit." Men, in their temper and disposition, shall then be like the lamb of God, the lovely Jesus. The body shall be conformed to the head.

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Then shall all the world be united in one amiable society. All nations, in all parts of the world, on every side of the globe, shall then be knit together in sweet harmony. All parts of God's church shall assist and promote the spiritual good of one another. A communication shall then be upheld between all parts of the world to that end; and the art of navigation, which is now applied so much to favour men's covetousness and pride, and is used so much by wicked debauched men, shall then be consecrated to God, and applied to holy uses, (see Isa. lx. 5—9.) And then men will be abundant in expressing their love one to another, not only in words, but in deeds of charity, Isa. xxxii. 5. "The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful;" but, (ver. 8.) "the liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand."

(5.) It will be a time of *excellent order* in the church of Christ. The true government and discipline of the church will then be settled and put into practice. All the world shall then be as one church, one orderly, regular, beautiful society. And as the body shall be one, so the members shall be in beautiful proportion to each other. Then shall that be verified in Psal. cxxii. 3. *Jerusalem is builded as a city, that is compact together.*

(6.) The church of God shall then be *beautiful and glorious* on these accounts; yea, it will appear in the perfection of beauty: Isa. lx. 1. "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Isa. lxi. 10. "He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." On these accounts, the church will then be the greatest image of heaven itself.

(7.) That will be a time of the greatest *temporal prosperity*. Such a spiritual state as we have just described, has a natural tendency to health and long life; and that this will actually be the case, is evident by Zech. viii. 4. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age." It has also a natural tendency to procure ease, quietness, pleasantness, and cheerfulness of mind, also wealth, and a great increase of children; as is intimated in Zech. viii. 5. "And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof."——But further, the temporal prosperity of the people of God will also be promoted by a remarkable blessing from heaven: Isa. lxv. 21. "They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them." And in Mic. iv. 4. "But they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid." Zech. vii. 12. "For the

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seed shall be prosperous, the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew, and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things." (See also Jer. xxxi. 12, 13, and Amos ix. 13.) Yea then they shall receive all manner of tokens of God's presence, acceptance, and favour: Jer. xxxiii. 9. "And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it." Even the days of Solomon were but an image of those days, as to the temporal prosperity which shall be obtained in them.

(8.) It will also be a time of great rejoicing: Isa. xxxv. 10. "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Chap. lv. 12. "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you." Chap. lxvi. 11. "That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations: that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory." Chap. xii. 3. "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." That will be the church's glorious wedding-day with Christ upon earth: Rev. xix. 7. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." Verse 9. "Blessed are they which are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb."

The scriptures every where represent this prosperity to be of long continuance. The former intervals of rest and prosperity, as we before observed, are represented to be but short; but the representations of this state are quite different: Rev. xx. 4. "And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus,—and they lived and reigned with Christ *a thousand years*." Isa. lx. 15. "Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of *many generations*."—This may suffice as to the prosperous state of the church through the greater part of the period from the destruction of Satan's visible kingdom in the world, to Christ's appearing in the clouds of heaven to judgment.

II. I now come to speak of the *great apostacy* there should be towards the close of this period, and how the church should, for a short time, be threatened by her enemies. And this I shall do under three particulars.

1. A little before the end of the world, *a great part of the world* shall fall away from Christ and his church. It is said, Rev. xx. 3, that Satan should be cast into the bottomless pit,

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and shut up, and have a seal set upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more *till the thousand years should be fulfilled;* and that afterward he must be loosed out of his prison for a little season. Accordingly we are told, (ver. 7, 8,) that when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and go forth to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog. This intimates, that the apostacy would be very general. The nations of the four quarters of the earth shall be deceived; and the number of those who shall now turn enemies to Christ shall be vastly great, as the army of Gog and Magog is represented in Ezek. It is said, (Rev. xx. 8,) that the number of them is as the sand of the sea, and that they went up on the breadth of the earth, as if they were an army large enough to reach from one side of the earth to the other.

Thus after a happy and glorious season, such a long day of light and holiness, of love and peace, and joy, it shall again be a dark time. Satan shall begin to set up his dominion again in the world; and this world shall again become a scene of darkness and wickedness. The bottomless pit shall be opened, and devils shall come up again out of it, and a dreadful smoke shall ascend to darken the world. And the church of Christ, instead of extending to the utmost bounds of the world, as it did before, shall be reduced to narrow limits. The world of mankind being continued so long in a state of great prosperity, shall now begin to abuse their prosperity, to serve their lust and corruption. This we learn from Luke xvii. 26, &c.

2. Those apostates shall make *great opposition* to the church of God. The church shall be threatened with a sudden and entire overthrow by them. It is said, Satan shall gather them together to battle, as the sand on the sea-shore; and they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city. So that this beloved city shall seem just ready to be swallowed up by them: for her enemies shall not only threaten her, but shall actually have gathered together against her; and not only so, but shall have besieged her, shall have compassed her about on every side.—However, there is nothing in the prophecy which seems to hold forth, that the church had actually fallen into their hands, as it had fallen into the hands of Antichrist, to whom it was given to make war with the saints, and to overcome them. God will never suffer this to take place after the fall of Antichrist; for then the day of her mourning shall be ended, alarmingly threatened with utter and sudden destruction.

3. Now the state of things will seem most remarkably to

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call for Christ's immediate appearance to *judgment*. For then the world shall be filled with the most aggravated wickedness. For much the greater part of the world shall have become visibly wicked and open enemies to Christ, and their wickedness shall be dreadfully aggravated by their apostacy. Before the fall of Antichrist, most of the world was full of visibly wicked men. But the greater part of these are poor Heathens, who never enjoyed the light of the gospel; and others are those that have been bred up in the Mahometan or Popish darkness. But these have apostatized from the Christian church, the visible kingdom of Christ, in which they enjoyed the great light and privileges of glorious times, which shall be incomparably greater than the light and privileges which the church of God enjoys now. This apostacy will be most like the apostacy of the devils of any that ever had before been: for the devils apostatized, and turned enemies to Christ, though they enjoyed the light of heaven; and these will apostatize, and turn enemies to him, though they have enjoyed the light and privileges of the glorious times of the church. That such should turn open and avowed enemies to Christ, and should seek the ruin of his church, will cry aloud for such immediate vengeance as was executed on the devils when they fell.

The wickedness of the world will remarkably call for Christ's immediate appearing in flaming fire to take vengeance on them, because of the way in which they shall manifest their wickedness. This will be by scoffing and blaspheming Christ and his holy religion; and particularly, they will scoff at the notion of Christ's coming to judgment, of which the church shall be in expectation. For now doubtless will be the greatest fulfilment of 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4. "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." They shall be in no expectation of the coming of Christ to judgment, and shall laugh at the notion. They shall trample all such things under foot, and shall give up themselves to their lusts, or to eat and drink, and wallow in sensual delights, as though they were to be here for ever. They shall despise the warnings the church shall give them of the coming of Christ to judgment, as the people of the old world despised what Noah told them of the approaching flood, and as the people of Sodom did when Lot said to them, *The Lord will destroy this city*. Their wickedness on this account will cry aloud to heaven for Christ's appearing in flaming fire to take vengeance of his enemies; and because they shall exercise their wickedness in a wicked design and violent attempt against the holy

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city of God, wherein for so long a time, so much of the religion of Christ had been seen.

And the great number of the wicked is another thing which shall especially call for Christ's coming: for the world then will doubtless be exceeding full of people, having continued so long in so great a state of prosperity, without such terrible desolating extremities, as wars, pestilences, and the like, to diminish them. And the major part of this world, which shall be so populous, will be wicked contemptuous apostates from God. Undoubtedly the world then will be by far fuller of wickedness than ever it was before, from its foundation. And if the wickedness of the old world, when men began to multiply on the earth, called for the destruction of the world by a deluge of *water*, this wickedness will as much call for its destruction by a deluge of *fire*.

Again, the circumstances of the church at that day will also eminently call for the immediate appearing of Christ, as they will be compassed about by their blasphemous murderous enemies, just ready to be swallowed up by them. And it will be a most distressing time with the church, excepting the comfort they will have in the hope of deliverance from God: for all other help will seem to fail. The case will be come to the last extremity, and there will be an immediate need that Christ should come to their deliverance. And though the church shall be so eminently threatened, yet so will Providence order it, that it shall be preserved till Christ shall appear in his immediate presence, coming in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels. And then will come the time when all the elect shall be gathered in. That work of conversion which has been carried on from the beginning of the church after the fall through all those ages, shall be carried on no more. There never shall another soul be converted. Every one of those many millions, whose names were written in the book of life before the foundation of the world, shall be brought in; not one soul shall be lost. And the mystical body of Christ, which has been growing since it first began in the days of Adam, will be complete as to the number of parts, having every one of its members. In this respect, the work of redemption will now be finished: And now the end for which the means of grace have been instituted shall be obtained.—All that effect which was intended, shall now be accomplished.

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PART IX.

The General Judgment.

THUS I have shown how the success of Christ's redemption has been accomplished during the continuance of the Christian church under the means of grace. We have seen what great revolutions there have been, and are to be, during this space of time; how the great wheels of providence have gone round for the accomplishment of that kind of success of Christ's purchase, which consists in the bestowment of grace on the elect. In the prosecution of the subject, we are come to the time when all the wheels have gone round; the course of things in this state of it is finished, and all things are ripe for Christ's coming to judgment.

The success of Christ's purchase is of two kinds, consisting either in grace or glory. The success consisting in the former of these, is to be seen in those works of God which are wrought during those ages that the church is continued under the means of grace; and the success consisting in the latter, will chiefly be accomplished at the day of judgment. —Having already shown how the *former* kind of success has been accomplished, I come now to the *latter*, viz. that kind of success which is accomplished in the bestowment of *glory* on the church at the day of judgment.——And here I would mention two or three things in *general*, concerning this kind of success of Christ's purchase.

1. How *great* the success of Christ's purchase is, appears chiefly in this very thing. The success of Christ's purchase summarily consists in the *salvation* of the elect. But this bestowment of *glory* is eminently called *their salvation:* Heb. ix. 28. "To them that look for him, shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation."——So it is called *redemption,* being eminently that wherein the redemption of the church consists. So in Eph. iv. 30. "Sealed unto the day of redemption;" and Luke xxi. 28, and Eph. i. 14. "Redemption of the purchased possession."

2. All that precedes this, while the church is under the means of grace, is only to make way for the success which is to be accomplished in the bestowment of glory. The *means of* grace, and God's *grace* itself, is bestowed on the elect to make them meet for glory.

3. All those glorious things which were brought to pass for the church while under the means of grace, are but images and shadows of this. So were those glorious things which were accomplished for the church in the days of Constantine

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the Great; and so is all that glory which is to succeed the fall of Antichrist. However great, it is all but a shadow of what will be bestowed at the day of judgment. But I hasten more particularly to show how this kind of success will be accomplished.

1. Christ will appear in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels, coming in the clouds of heaven. When the world is thus revelling in their wickedness, and compassing the holy city, just ready to destroy it, then shall the glorious Redeemer make his appearance. He through whom this redemption has all along been carried on, shall appear in the sight of the world; the light of his glory shall break forth; the whole world shall immediately have notice of it, and they shall lift up their eyes and behold this wonderful sight. *Every eye shall see him,* (Rev. i. 7.) Christ shall appear coming in his human nature, in that same body (now glorified) which was brought forth in a stable, and laid in a manger, which afterwards was so cruelly used, and nailed to the cross.

Men shall now lift up their eyes, and see him coming in such majesty and glory as now is to us utterly inconceivable. The glory of the sun in a clear firmament, will be but darkness in comparison of it; and all the glorious angels and archangels shall attend him; thousand thousands ministering to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand round about him.—How different a person will he then appear from what he did at his first coming, when he was as a root out of a dry ground, a poor, despised, afflicted man! How different now is his appearance, in the midst of those glorious angels, principalities, and powers, in heavenly places, attending him as his ordinary servants, from what it was when in the midst of a ring of soldiers, with his mock robe and his crown of thorns, buffeted and spit upon, or hanging on the cross between two thieves, with a multitude of his enemies triumphing over him!

This will be a most unexpected sight to the wicked world: it will come as a cry at midnight: they shall be taken in the midst of their wickedness, and it will give them a dreadful alarm. It will at once break up their revels, their eating and drinking, and carousing. It will put a quick end to the design of the great army that will then be compassing the camp of the saints: it will make them let drop their weapons out of their hands. The world, which will then be very full of people, most of whom will be wicked men, will then be filled with dolorous shrieking and crying; for all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him, (Rev. i. 7.) And where shall they hide themselves? How will the sight of that awful majesty terrify them when taken in the midst of their wickedness! Then they shall see who he is, what kind of a person he is, whom they have mocked and scoffed at, and whose church they

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have been endeavouring to overthrow. This sight will change their voice. The voice of their laughter and singing, while they are marrying and giving in marriage, and the voice of their scoffing, shall be changed into hideous, hellish yelling. Their countenances shall be changed from a show of carnal mirth, haughty pride, and contempt of God's people; they shall put on ghastly terror and amazement; and trembling and chattering of teeth shall seize upon them.

But with respect to the saints, it shall be a joyful and most glorious sight to them: for this sight will at once deliver them from all fear of their enemies, who were before compassing them about, just ready to swallow them up. Deliverance shall come in their extremity: the glorious Captain of their salvation shall appear for them, at a time when no other help appeared. Then shall they lift up their heads, and their redemption shall be drawing nigh, (Luke xxi. 28.) Christ will appear with infinite majesty, yet at the same time they shall see infinite love in his countenance. And thus to see their Redeemer coming in the clouds of heaven, will fill their hearts full of gladness. Their countenances also shall be changed, not as the countenances of the wicked, but from being sorrowful, to be exceedingly joyful and triumphant. And now the work of redemption will be finished in another sense, *viz.* that the whole church shall be completely and eternally freed from all persecution and molestation from wicked men and devils.

II. The last trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised, and the living changed. God sent forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, to gather together his elect from the four corners of the earth in a mystical sense, before the destruction of Jerusalem; *i. e.* he sent forth the apostles, and others, to preach the gospel all over the world. And so in a mystical sense the great trumpet was blown at the beginning of the glorious times of the church. But now the great trumpet is blown in a more literal sense, with a mighty sound which shakes the earth. There will be a great signal given by a mighty sound made, which is called *the voice of the archangel,* as being the angel of greatest strength; 1 Thess. iv. 16. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." On the sound of the great trumpet, the dead shall be raised every where. Now the number of the dead is very great. How many has death cut down since the world has stood. But then the number will be much greater, the world shall have stood longer, and through most of the remaining time it will doubtless be much fuller of inhabitants than ever it has been. All these shall now rise from the dead. The graves shall be opened in all parts of the world, and the sea shall give up the innumerable dead that are in it, (Rev. xx. 13.)

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And now all the inhabitants that ever shall have been upon the face of the earth, shall all appear upon earth at once. Among these will be Adam and Eve, the first parents of mankind, Abel, and Seth, and Methuselah, and all the saints who were their cotemporaries; Noah and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the prophets of Israel and holy confessors. Among them will appear all the holy apostles of Jesus Christ, and all the saints of their times; all the holy martyrs who fell under furious persecutions. There will be found all who belonged to the church in its wilderness-state, during the dark times of Antichrist, and all who have suffered under his persecuting cruelty, with all the saints of past and the present time, and that shall be to the end of the world.—Now also all the enemies of the church in all the ages shall appear again; all the wicked Heathens, and Jews, and Mahometans, and Papists. Sinners of all sorts; demure hypocrites, prophane sensualists, heretics, Deists, and all cruel persecutors, and all who shall have died in sin, shall come together.

And at the same time that the dead are raised, the living shall be changed. The bodies of the wicked who shall then be living, shall be so changed as to fit them for eternal torment; and the bodies of all the living saints shall be changed to be like unto Christ's glorious body, 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52, 53.——The bodies of the saints shall be so changed as to render them for ever incapable of pain, or affliction, or uneasiness; and all that dulness and heaviness, and all that deformity, which their bodies had before, shall be put off; and they shall put on strength, and beauty, activity, and incorruptible unfading glory. And in such glory shall the bodies of all the risen saints appear.

And now the work of redemption shall be finished in another respect, *viz.* that all the elect shall now be actually redeemed both in soul and body. Before this, the work of redemption, as to its actual success, was but incomplete; for only the *souls* of the redeemed were actually saved and glorified, excepting in some few instances: but now all the *bodies* of the saints shall be saved and glorified together; all the elect shall be glorified in the whole man, the soul and body in union.

III. Now shall the saints be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and all wicked men and devils shall be arraigned before the judgment-seat. When the dead saints are raised, then the whole church, consisting of all the elect through all ages, will stand together on the earth, at least all excepting those few whose bodies were glorified before; and then they shall all mount up as with wings to meet Christ. It seems that Christ, when he comes to judgment, will not come quite to the ground, but his throne will be fixed in the airy

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region, whence he may be seen by all that vast multitude that shall be gathered before him. The saints therefore shall ascend up to their Saviour. Thus the apostle tells us, that when the dead in Christ are raised, and the living changed, then those who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be ever with the Lord, 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. What a wonderful sight will that be, when all the many millions of saints are thus mounting up.

Then shall the work of redemption be finished in another respect: then shall the whole church be perfectly and for ever delivered from this present evil world; shall take their everlasting leave of this earth, where they have been strangers, and which has been for the most part a scene of trouble and sorrow: where the devil has reigned as God, and has greatly molested them, and which has been such a scene of wickedness and abomination; where Christ their Lord has been cruelly used; and where they have been so hated, reproached, and persecuted. They shall leave it, and shall never set foot on it again. And there shall be an everlasting separation made between them and wicked men. Before, they were mixed together, and it was impossible in many instances to determine their characters; but now all shall become visible; both saints and sinners shall appear in their true characters and forms.—Then shall all the church be seen ascending to the right hand of Christ. What a mighty cloud of them will there be!

And then also the work of redemption will be finished in another respect, *viz.* that then the church shall all be gathered together. They all belonged to one society before, but yet were greatly separated with respect to the place of their habitation. Some were in heaven, and some on earth; and those who were on earth were separated, many of them by wide oceans, and vast continents. But now they shall all be gathered together, never to be separated any more. And not only shall all the members of the church now be gathered together, but all shall be gathered unto their Head, into his immediate glorious presence, never to be separated from him any more.

At the same time, all wicked men and devils shall be brought before the judgment-seat of Christ. These shall be gathered to the left hand of Christ, and, as it seems, will still remain upon the earth, and shall not be caught up into the air, as the saints shall be. The devil, that old serpent, shall now be dragged up out of hell. He, that first procured the fall and misery of mankind, and has so set himself against their redemption—and has all along shown himself such an inveterate enemy to the Redeemer—shall never more have any thing to do with the church of God, nor be suffered in the least to afflict or molest any member of it for ever. Instead of that,

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now he must be judged, and receive the due reward of his deeds. Now is come the time which he has always dreaded; the time wherein he must be judged, and receive his full punishment. He who by his temptation maliciously procured Christ's crucifixion, and triumphed as though he had obtained the victory, even *he* shall see the consequences of that death which he procured. Now he must stand before that same Jesus, to be judged, condemned, and eternally destroyed by him. If Satan, the prince of hell, trembles at the thought of it thousands of years beforehand, how much more will he tremble, proud and stubborn as he is, when he comes to stand at Christ's bar!

Then shall he also stand at the bar of the saints, whom he has so hated, afflicted, and molested: for the saints shall judge him with Christ: 1 Cor. vi. 3. *Know ye not that we shall judge angels?* Now shall he be as it were subdued under the church's feet, agreeable to Rom. xvi. 20.——Satan, when he first tempted our first parents to sin, deceitfully and lyingly told them, that they should be as gods; but little did he think that they should indeed be so far *as gods*, as to be assessors with God to judge him. Much less did he think, that one of that *nature* which he then tempted, one of the posterity of those very *persons* whom he tempted, should actually be united to God; that as God he should judge the world, and that he himself must stand trembling and astonished before his judgment-seat. But thus all the devils in hell, who have so opposed Christ and his kingdom, shall now at last stand in utmost amazement and horror before Christ and his church, who shall appear to condemn them.

Now also shall all Christ's other enemies be brought to appear before him. Now shall proud scribes and Pharisees, who had such a malignant hatred of Christ while in his state of humiliation, and who persecuted him to death, be made to come. Now those before whose judgment-seat Christ once stood, as a malefactor at their bar—and those who mocked him, buffeted him, and spit in his face—shall see Christ in his awful glory, as forewarned, Matt. xxvi. 64, 65. Then *Christ* was before *their* judgment-seat; but now it is *their* turn to stand before *his* judgment-seat with inconceivable horror and amazement, with ghastly countenances, quaking limbs, chattering teeth, and knees smiting one against another.

Now also all the cruel enemies and persecutors of the church that have been in all ages, shall come in sight together. Pharaoh and the Egyptians, Antiochus Epiphanes, the malignant scribes and Pharisees, the persecuting Heathen emperors, Julian the apostate, the cruel persecuting Popes and Papists, Gog and Magog, shall all appear at once before the judgment-seat of Christ. They and the saints who have in every age

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been persecuted by them, shall come in sight, and must now confront one another before the great Judge. And now shall the saints on their glorious thrones be made the judges of those unjust kings and rulers who before judged and condemned them, and put them to cruel death. Now shall those persecutors behold the glory to which they are arrived, whom they before so cruelly despised, and so cruelly treated. Thus wonderfully will the face of things be altered; now will all things be coming to rights.

IV. The righteousness of the church shall be manifested, and all the wickedness of their enemies shall be brought to light. Those saints who had been the objects of hatred, reproach, and contempt in the world; reviled and condemned by their persecutors without a cause, shall now be fully vindicated. They shall now appear clothed with the glorious robe of Christ's righteousness. It shall be most manifest before the world, that Christ's righteousness is theirs, and they shall gloriously shine forth in it. Then shall their inherent holiness be made manifest, and all their good works be brought to light. The good things which they did in secret shall now be manifested openly. Those holy ones of God, who had been treated as the filth and offscouring of the earth, as if not fit to live, as worse than beasts or devils, shall now appear to have been the excellent of the earth. Now God will bring forth their righteousness as the light, and their judgment as the noon-day. And now it shall appear who *indeed* were those wicked persons that were not fit to live; when all the wickedness of the enemies of Christ and his church, their pride, their malice, their cruelty, their hatred of true religion, shall be set forth in all its horrid acts, in its proper colours.

And now the righteous may be heard before this great Judge, who could not be heard before those unjust judges. Now they shall declare their cause, and rise up in judgment against their persecutors, and shall declare how they had been treated by them. And now all the wickedness of the wicked shall be brought to light; even all their *secret* wickedness, and their very hearts shall be opened to view, and as it were turned inside out, before the bright light of that great day. Things which have been spoken in the ear, in the closet, and done in the dark, shall be manifested in the light, and proclaimed before angels and men.

V. The sentence shall be pronounced on the righteous and the wicked. Christ, the glorious judge, shall pass that blessed sentence on the church at his right hand, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* This sentence shall be pronounced with infinite love, and the voice will cause every heart to flow with joy. Thus Christ shall pronounce a sentence of justification

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on millions, who before had a sentence of condemnation passed upon them by their persecuting rulers. He will thus put honour upon those who have been before despised; he will own them for his, and will put a crown of glory upon their heads before the world; and then shall they shine forth as the sun with Jesus Christ in glory and joy, in the sight of all their enemies.

And then shall the sentence of condemnation be passed on the wicked, *Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* Thus shall the church's enemies be condemned; in which sentence of condemnation, the holy martyrs, who have suffered from them, shall concur. When the words of this sentence are pronounced, they will strike every heart of those at the left hand with inconceivable horror and amazement. Every syllable of it will be more terrible than a stream of lightning through their hearts. What horrible shrieking, quaking, gnashing of teeth, distortions of countenance, hideous looks, hideous actions, and hideous voices, will be seen through all that vast throng!

VI. Upon this, Christ and all his saints, and all the holy angels ministering to them, shall leave this lower world, and ascend towards the highest heavens. Christ shall ascend in as great glory as he descended, and in some respects greater: for now he shall ascend with his elect church with him, glorified in body and soul. Christ's first ascension to heaven soon after his own resurrection was very glorious. But this his second ascension, with his mystical body, his whole church, shall be far more glorious. The redeemed church shall all ascend with him in a most joyful and triumphant manner: and all their enemies and persecutors, who shall be left behind to be consumed, shall see the sight, and hear their songs.—And thus Christ's church shall for ever leave this accursed world, to go into the highest heavens, the paradise of God, the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

VII. When they are gone, this world shall be set on fire, and be turned into a great furnace, wherein all the enemies of Christ and his church shall be tormented for ever and ever. This is manifest by 2 Pet. iii. 7. "But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men." When Christ and his church are ascended to a distance from this world—that miserable company of the wicked being left behind, to have their sentence executed upon them here—then, this whole lower world shall be set on fire, either from heaven, or by fire breaking out of the bowels of the earth, or both, as it was with the water in the time of the deluge. However, this lower world shall be set all on fire.—— How will it strike the wicked with horror, when the fire begins

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to lay hold upon them, and they find no way to escape from it! What shrieking and crying will there be among those many millions, when they begin to enter into this great furnace, when the whole world shall be a furnace of the fiercest and most raging heat! insomuch that the apostle Peter says, (2 Pet. iii. 10, 12,) that "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up; and the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." And so fierce shall be its heat, that it shall burn the earth into its very centre: which seems to be what is meant, Deut. xxxii. 22. "For a fire is kindled in my anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains."

And here shall all the persecutors of the church of God burn in everlasting fire, who had before burnt the saints at the stake; and shall suffer torments far beyond all that their utmost wit and malice could inflict on the saints. And here the bodies of all the wicked shall burn, and be tormented to all eternity, and never be consumed; and the wrath of God shall be poured out on their souls. Though the souls of the wicked in hell do now suffer dreadful punishment, yet their punishment will be so increased at the day of judgment, that what they suffered before is, in comparison of it, as an imprisonment to the execution which follows it. And now the devil, that old serpent, shall receive his full punishment; now that for fear of which he before trembled, shall fully come upon him. This world, which formerly used to be the place of his kingdom, where he set up himself as God, shall now be the place of his complete punishment, of full and everlasting torment. And in this, one design of the work of redemption, *viz.* putting Christ's enemies under his feet, shall be perfectly accomplished. His enemies shall now be made his footstool, in the fullest degree. Now shall be the most perfect fulfilment of Gen. iii. 15, *It shall bruise thy head.*

VIII. At the same time, all the church shall enter with Christ, their glorious Lord, into the highest heavens, and there shall enter on the state of their highest and eternal blessedness and glory. While the lower world, which they have left under their feet, is seized with the fire of God's vengeance, and flames are kindling upon it, and the wicked are entering into everlasting fire, the whole church shall enter, with their glorious head, and all the holy angels attending, in a joyful manner, into the eternal paradise of God, the palace of the great Jehovah, their heavenly Father. The gates shall open wide for them to enter, and there Christ will bring them into his chambers in the highest sense. Here Christ will bring them

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and present them in glory to his Father, saying, *Here am I, and the children which thou hast given me;* as much as to say, Here am I, with every one of those whom thou gavest me from eternity to take the care of, that they might be redeemed and glorified, and to redeem whom I have done and suffered so much, and to make way for whose redemption I have for so many ages been accomplishing such great changes. Here they are now perfectly redeemed in body and soul; I have delivered them from all the ill fruits of the fall, and freed them from all their enemies: I have brought them all together into one glorious society, and united them all in myself: I have openly justified them before all angels and men, and here I have brought them all away from that accursed world where they have suffered so much, and have brought them before thy throne: I have done all that for them which thou hast appointed me: I have perfectly cleansed them in my blood, and here they are in perfect holiness, shining with thy perfect image. And then the Father will accept of them, own them all for his children, and welcome them to the eternal and perfect inheritance and glory of his house, and will on this occasion give more glorious manifestations of his love than ever before, and will admit them to a more full and perfect enjoyment of himself.

Now shall be the marriage of the Lamb in the most perfect sense. The commencement of the glorious times of the church on earth, after the fall of Antichrist, is represented as the marriage of the Lamb; but after this we read of another marriage of the Lamb, at the close of the day of judgment.—After the beloved disciple had given an account of the day of judgment, (Rev. xx. xxi.) he gives an account, that he saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Christ shall bring his church into his Father's house in heaven, as his bride, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

The bridegroom and the bride shall then enter into heaven, both having on their wedding-robes, attended with all the glorious angels. And there they enter on the feast and joys of their marriage before the Father; they shall then begin an everlasting wedding-day. This shall be the day of the gladness of Christ's heart, wherein he will greatly rejoice, and all the saints shall rejoice with them. Christ shall rejoice over his bride, and the bride shall rejoice in her husband, in the state of her consummate and everlasting blessedness, of which we have a particular description in the 21st and 22d chapters of Revelation.

And now the whole work of redemption is finished. Now the top-stone of the building is laid. In the progress of our discourse, we have followed the church of God in all her

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great changes, all her tossings to and fro, all her storms and tempests through the many ages of the world. We have seen her enter the harbour, and landed in the highest heavens, in complete and eternal glory. We have gone through the several ages of time, as the providence and word of God have led us. We have seen all the church's enemies fixed in endless misery, and have seen the church presented in her perfect redemption before the Father in heaven, there to enjoy this most unspeakable and inconceivable glory and blessedness; and there we leave her to enjoy this glory throughout the never-ending ages of eternity.

Now all Christ's enemies will be perfectly put under his feet, and he shall have his most perfect triumph over sin and Satan, and all his instruments, and death, and hell. Now shall all the promises made to Christ by God the Father before the foundation of the world, the promises of the covenant of redemption, be fully accomplished. Christ shall now perfectly have obtained the joy set before him, for which he undertook those great sufferings in his state of humiliation. Now shall all the hopes and expectations of the saints be fulfilled. The state of the church before, was progressive and preparatory: but now she is arrived to her most perfect state of glory. All the glory of the church on earth is but a faint shadow of this her consummate glory in heaven.

Now Christ the great Redeemer shall be most perfectly glorified, God the Father shall be glorified in him, and the Holy Ghost shall be most fully glorified in the perfection of his work on the hearts of all the church.——And now shall that new heaven and new earth, or the renewed state of things, be completely finished, after the material frame of the old heavens and old earth is destroyed: Rev. xxi. 1. *And I saw a new heaven, and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.*—And now will the great Redeemer have perfected every thing that appertains to the work of redemption, which he began so soon after the fall of man. And who can conceive of the triumph of those praises which shall be sung in heaven on this great occasion, so much greater than that on the fall of Antichrist! The beloved disciple John (Rev. xix.) seems to want expressions to describe those praises, and says, *It was as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.* But much more inexpressible will those praises be, which will be sung in heaven after the final consummation of all things. How shall the praises of that vast and glorious multitude be as mighty thunderings indeed!

How are all the former things passed away, and what a glorious state are things fixed in to remain to all eternity!——And as Christ, when he first entered upon the work of redemp-

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tion, had the kingdom committed to him of the Father, and as he took on himself the administration of the affairs of the universe, to manage all so as to subserve the purposes of this affair; so now, the work being finished, he will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father. 1 Cor. xv. 24. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power." Not that Christ shall cease to reign after this; for it is said, Luke i. 33, "He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end;" and Dan. vii. 14, "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." But the meaning is, that Christ shall deliver up that kingdom or dominion which he has over the world, as the Father's delegate or vice-gerent, which the Father committed to him, to be managed in subserviency to this great design of redemption. The end of this commission, or delegation, which he had from the Father, seems to be to subserve this particular design of redemption; and therefore, when that design is fully accomplished, the commission will cease, and Christ will deliver it up to the Father, from whom he received it.

PART X.

Improvement of the Whole.

I PROCEED now to enter upon some improvement of the whole that has been said from this doctrine.

I. Hence we may learn how great a work is this of redemption. We have now had it, though in a very imperfect manner, set forth, in its whole progress, from its first beginning after the fall, to its consummation. We have seen how God has carried on this building, by a long succession of wonderful works, advancing it higher and higher from one age to another, till the top-stone is laid. And now let us consider how great a work this is. Do men, when they behold some great edifices, admire their magnificence; how well may we admire the greatness of this building of God, which he builds up age after age? There are three things exhibited to us in what has been said, which especially show the *greatness* of the work of redemption.

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1. The greatness of those *particular events*, and dispensations of providence, by which it is accomplished. How great are those things which God has done, which are but so many parts of this great work! What great things were done in the world to *prepare the way* for Christ's coming to purchase, and what great things were done in the actual purchase of redemption! What a wonderful thing was accomplished to put Christ in an immediate capacity for this purchase, *viz.* his *incarnation*, that God should become man! And what great things were done in that purchase, that a person, who is the eternal Jehovah, should live upon earth for four or five and thirty years together, in a mean, despised condition, that he should spend his life in such labours and sufferings, and that at last he should die upon the cross! And what great things have been done to accomplish the *success* of Christ's redemption! what great things to put him into a capacity to accomplish this success! For this purpose he rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and all things were made subject to him. How many miracles have been wrought, what mighty revolutions have been brought to pass in the world already, and how much greater shall be brought to pass, in order to it!

2. The *number* of those great events by which God carries on this work, shows the greatness of the work. Those mighty revolutions are so many as to fill up many ages. The particular wonderful events by which the work of creation was carried on filled up six days; but the great dispensations by which the work of redemption is carried on, are so many, that they fill up six or seven thousand years at least, as we have reason to conclude from the word of God.——There were great things wrought in this affair before the flood, and in the flood the world was once destroyed by water, and God's church was so wonderfully preserved from it in order to carry on this work. And after the flood, what great things did God work relating to the resettling of the world, to the building of Babel, the dispersing of the nations, the shortening of the days of man's life, the calling of Abraham, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and that long series of wonderful providences relating to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph; and those wonders in Egypt, and at the Red sea, in the wilderness, and in Canaan, in Joshua's time, and by a long succession of wonderful providences from age to age towards the nation of the Jews.

What great things were wrought by God, in so often overturning the world before Christ came, to make way for his coming! What great things were done also in Christ's time, and after that in overturning Satan's kingdom in the Heathen empire, and in so preserving his church in the dark times of Popery, and in bringing about the Reformation!—

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How many great and wonderful things will be effected in accomplishing the glorious times of the church, and at Christ's last coming on the day of judgment, in the destruction of the world, and in carrying the whole church into heaven!

3. The *glorious issue* of this whole affair, in the perfect and eternal destruction of the wicked, and in the consummate glory of the righteous. And now let us once more take a view of this building, now all is finished and the top-stone laid. It appeared in a glorious height in the apostles' time, and much more glorious in the time of Constantine, and will appear much more glorious still after the fall of Antichrist; but at the consummation of all things, it appears in an immensely more glorious height than ever before. Now it appears in its greatest magnificence, as a complete lofty structure, whose top reaches to the heaven of heavens; a building worthy of the great God, the King of kings.

And from what has been said, one may argue, that the work of redemption is the greatest of all God's works of which we have any notice, and it is the end of all his other works.—It appears plainly from what has been said, that this is the principal of all God's works of providence, and that all are subordinate to the great affair of redemption. We see that all the revolutions in the world are to subserve this grand design. This shows how much greater the work of redemption is, than the work of creation; because it is the end of it, as the use of a house is the end of the building it. But the work of redemption is the sum of all God's works of providence; all are subordinate to it: so the work of the new creation is more excellent than the old. So it ever is, that when one thing is removed by God to make way for another, the new one excels the old. Thus the temple excelled the tabernacle; the new covenant the old; the new dispensation of the gospel the dispensation of Moses; the throne of David the throne of Saul; the priesthood of Christ the priesthood of Aaron; the new Jerusalem the old; and so the new creation far excels the old.

God has used the creation for no other purpose, but to subserve the designs of this affair. To answer this end, he hath created and disposed of mankind; to this the angels, to this the earth, to this the highest heavens. God created the world to provide a spouse and a kingdom for his Son; and the setting up of the kingdom of Christ, and the spiritual marriage of the spouse to him, is what the whole creation labours and travails in pain to bring to pass. This work of redemption is so much the greatest of all the works of God, that all other works are to be looked upon either as parts of it, or appendages to it, or are some way reducible to it; and so all the decrees of God some way or other belong to that eternal covenant of

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redemption which was between the Father and the Son before the foundation of the world. Every decree of God is some way or other reducible to that covenant. And seeing this work of redemption is so great, we need not wonder that the angels desire to look into it. And we need not wonder that so much is made of it in scripture, that it is so much insisted on in the histories, and prophecies, and songs of the Bible; for the work of redemption is the great subject of the whole, its doctrines, its promises, its types, its songs, its histories, and its prophecies.

II. Hence we may learn how God is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and ending of all things. Such are the characters and titles we find often ascribed to him in scripture. Isa. xli. 4. "Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the Lord, the first, and with the last, I am he." And particularly does the scripture ascribe such titles to God, where it speaks of providence, as it relates to, and is summed up in the great work of redemption; (as Isa. xliv. 6, 7, and xlviii. 9—12.) Therefore, when Christ reveals the future great events of providence relating to his church and people, to his disciple John, he often reveals himself under this character. Rev. i. 8. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." So again, verse 10, 11. "I heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." Alpha and Omega being the names of the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet, it signifies the same as his being the first and the last, and the beginning and the ending: as Rev. xxi. 6. "And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." And so chapter xxii. 12, 13. "And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."

We have seen on what design God began the course of his providence in the beginning of the generations of men; and how he has all along carried things on agreeably to the same design without ever failing; and how at last the conclusion and final issue of things are to God; and therefore may well now cry out with the apostle, Rom. xi. 33, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" and verse 36, "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

We have seen how other things came to an end one after another; how states, and kingdoms, and empires, fell, and

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came to nothing, even the greatest and strongest of them; we have seen how the world has been often overturned, and will be more remarkably yet; we have seen how it was first destroyed by water, and how at last it shall be utterly destroyed by fire: but yet God remains the same through all ages. He was before the beginning of this course of things, and he will be after the end of them; (Psalm cii. 25, 26.) Thus God is he *who is*, and *who was*, and *who is to come*.

We have seen, in a variety of instances, how all other gods perish. Those in the nations about Canaan, and throughout the Roman empire, are all destroyed, and their worship long since overthrown. We have heard how Antichrist, who has called himself a god on earth; how Mahomet, who claims religious honours; how all the gods of the Heathen through the world, will come to an end; and how Satan, the great dragon, that old serpent, who has set up himself as god of this world, will be cast into the lake of fire, there to suffer his complete punishment: but Jehovah remains, his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and of his dominion there is no end. We have seen what mighty changes there have been in the world; but God is unchangeable, *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*.

We began at the head of the stream of divine providence, and have traced it through its various windings, till we are come to the end where it issues. As it began in God, so it ends in him. God is the infinite ocean into which it empties itself.——Providence is like a mighty wheel, whose circumference is so high that it is dreadful, with the glory of the God of Israel above upon it; as it is represented in Ezekiel's vision. We have seen the revolution of this wheel, and how, as it was from God, its return has been to God again. All the events of divine providence are like the links of a chain; the first link is from God, and the last is to him.

III. We may see by what has been said, how Christ has in all things the pre-eminence. For he is the great Redeemer; and therefore the work of redemption being the sum of God's works of providence, shows the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, as being above all, and through all, and in all. That God intended the world for his Son's use in the affair of redemption, is one reason why he created the world by him, Eph. iii. 9—12. What has been said, shows how all the *purposes* of God are purposed in Christ; and how he is before all, and above all. All things consist in him, are governed by him, and are for him, Col. i. 15—18. God makes him his first-born, higher than the kings of the earth, and sets his throne above their thrones. God has always upheld his kingdom, when others have come to an end; that appears at last above all, however greatly opposed for so many ages. All

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other kingdoms fall, but his kingdom is the last, and never gives place to any other.

We see, that whatever changes there are, and however highly Christ's enemies exalt themselves, yet he reigns in uncontrouled power and immense glory: in the end, his people are all perfectly saved and made happy, and all his enemies become his footstool.——And thus God gives the world to his Son for his inheritance.

IV. The consideration of what has been said, may greatly serve to show us the consistency, order, and beauty, of God's works of providence. If we behold events in any other view, all will look like confusion, like the tossing of waves; things will look as though one confused revolution came to pass after another, merely by blind chance, without any regular or certain end. But if we consider the events of providence in the light in which they have been set before us, and in which the scriptures set them before us, they appear an orderly series of events, all wisely directed in excellent harmony and consistence, tending all to one end. The wheels of providence are not turned round by blind chance, but are full of eyes round about, (as Ezekiel represents them,) and are guided by the Spirit of God: where the Spirit goes, they go. All God's works of providence, through all ages, meet at last, as so many lines meeting in one centre.

God's work of providence, like that of creation, is but one. The events of providence are not so many distinct, independent, works; but rather so many different parts of one work, one regular scheme. They are all united, just as the several parts of one building: there are many stones, many pieces of timber, but all are so joined, and fitly formed together, that they make but one building: they have all but one foundation, and are united at last in one top-stone.

God's providence may not unfitly be compared to a large and long river, having innumerable branches, beginning in different regions, and at a great distance one from another, and all conspiring to one common issue. After their very diverse and apparent contrary courses, they all collect together, the nearer they come to their common end, and at length discharge themselves at one mouth into the same ocean. The different streams of this river are apt to appear like mere confusion to us, because of our limited sight, whereby we cannot see the whole at once. A man who sees but one or two streams at a time, cannot tell, what their course tends to. Their course seems very crooked, and different streams seem to run for awhile different and contrary ways; and if we view things at a distance, there seem to be innumerable obstacles and impediments in the way, as rocks and mountains, and the like, to hinder their ever uniting, and coming to the ocean; but yet

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if we trace them, they all unite at last, all come to the same issue, disgorging themselves in one into the same great ocean. Not one of all the streams fail.

V. From the whole that has been said, we may strongly argue, that the scriptures are the word of God, because they alone inform us what God aims at, in his works. God doubtless is pursuing some design, and carrying on some scheme, in the various changes and revolutions which from age to age came to pass in the world. It is most reasonable to suppose, that there is some certain great design to which Providence subordinates all great successive changes in affairs. It is reasonable to suppose, that all revolutions, from the beginning of the world to the end of it, are but the various parts of the same scheme, all conspiring to bring to pass that great event which the great creator and governor of the world has ultimately in view; and that the scheme will not be finished, nor the design fully accomplished, and the great and ultimate event fully brought to pass, till the end of the world, and the last revolution is brought about.

Now there is nothing else that informs us what this scheme and design of God in his works is, but the holy scriptures.—Nothing else pretends to set in view the whole series of God's works of providence from beginning to end, and to inform us how all things were from God at first, for what end they are, how they were ordered from the beginning, how they will proceed to the end of the world, what they will come to at last, and how then all things shall be to God. Nothing else but the scriptures has any pretence for showing any manner of regular scheme or drift in those revolutions which God orders from age to age. Nothing else pretends to show what God would effect by the things which he has done, is doing, and will do; what he seeks and intends by them. Nothing else pretends to show, with any distinctness or certainty, how the world began, or to tell us the true original of things. Nothing but the scriptures set forth how God governed the world from the beginning of the generations of men upon the earth, in an orderly history; and nothing else sets before us how he will govern it to the end, by an orderly prophecy of future events; agreeable to the challenge which God makes to the gods, and prophets, and teachers of the Heathen, in Isa. xli. 22, 23. "Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods."

Reason shows, that it is fit and requisite, that the intelligent and rational beings of the world should know something of God's scheme and design in his works: for they doubtless

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are principally concerned. God's great design in his works, is doubtless concerning his reasonable creatures, rather than brute beasts and lifeless things. The revolutions by which God's great design is brought to pass, are doubtless chiefly among them, and concern their state, and not the state of things without life or reason. And therefore surely it is requisite, that they should know something of it; especially since reason teaches, that God has given his rational creatures a capacity of seeing him in his works; for this end, that they may see God's glory in them, and give him that glory. But how can they see God's glory in his works, if they do not know what his design in them is, and what he aims at by what he is doing in the world?

Further, it is fit that mankind should be somewhat informed of God's design in the government of the world, because they are made capable of actively falling in with that design, of promoting it, and acting herein as his friends and subjects. It is therefore reasonable to suppose, that God has given mankind some revelation to inform them of this; but there is nothing else that does it but the Bible. In the Bible this is done. Here we may learn the first original of things, and have an orderly account of the scheme of God's works from the beginning, through those ages that are beyond the reach of all other histories. Here we are told what God aims at in the whole, what is the great end, how he has contrived the grand design, and the great things he would accomplish.—Here we have a most rational excellent account of this matter, worthy of God, and exceedingly shewing forth the glory of his perfections, his majesty, his wisdom, his glorious holiness, grace, and love; and his exaltation above all, as the first and the last.

Here we are shown the various parts of the work of providence, and how all are connected together in a regular, beautiful, and glorious frame. In the Bible, we have an account of the whole scheme of providence, from the beginning of the world to the end of it, either in history or prophecy, and are told what will become of things at last; how they will issue in the subduing of God's enemies, and in the salvation and glory of his church, and setting up of the everlasting kingdom of his Son.

How rational, worthy, and excellent a revelation is this! and how excellent a book is the Bible, which contains so much beyond all other books in the world! and what characters are here of its being indeed a divine book! a book that the great Jehovah has given to mankind for their instruction, without which we should be left in miserable darkness and confusion.

VI. From what has been said, we may see the glorious

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majesty and *power* of God in this affair of redemption. His glorious power appears in upholding his church for so long a time, and carrying on this work; upholding it oftentimes when it was but as a little spark, or as smoking flax, in which the fire was almost extinct, and the powers of earth and hell combined to destroy it. Yet God has never suffered them to quench it, and finally will bring forth judgment unto victory. God glorifies his strength in his church's weakness; in causing his people, who are like a number of little infants, finally to triumph over all earth and hell; so that they shall tread on the lion and adder; the young lion and dragon shall they trample under foot. The glorious power of God appears in conquering his many and mighty enemies by that person who was once an infant in a manger, and appeared as a poor, weak, despised man. He conquers them and triumphs over them in their own weapon, the cross.

The glorious majesty of God appears in conquering all those mighty enemies of the church one age after another; in conquering Satan, that proud and strong spirit, and all his hellish host; in bringing him down under foot, long after he had vaunted himself as god of this world, and when he did his utmost to support himself in his kingdom. Christ, our Michael, has overcome him, the devil was cast out, and there was found no more place for him in heaven; but he was cast out unto the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.—He is conquered in that kingdom wherein his pride, and subtilty, and cruelty, above all appears, *viz.* the kingdom of Antichrist. And the glorious power of God appears in thus conquering the devil, and bringing him under foot, after long time given him to strengthen himself to his utmost. He was once overthrown in his Heathen Roman empire, after he had been making himself strong in those parts of the world, ever since the building of Babel. It appears also in overthrowing his kingdom more fatally and universally all over the world, after he had another opportunity to strengthen himself to his utmost for many ages, by setting up those two great kingdoms of Antichrist and Mahomet, and to establish his interest in the Heathen world. We have seen how these kingdoms of God's enemies, look strong, as though it was impossible to overthrow them; yet, when God appears, they seem to melt away, as the fat of lambs before the fire, and are driven away as the chaff before the whirlwind.

Those mighty kingdoms of Antichrist and Mahomet, which have made such a figure for so many ages, and have trampled the world under foot, when God comes to appear, will vanish away like a shadow, and will disappear of themselves, as the darkness in a room does, when the light is brought in. What are God's enemies in his hands? How is

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their greatest strength weakness when he rises up! and how weak will they all appear together at the day of judgment! Thus we may apply those words in the song of Moses, Exod. xv. 6. "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy." And how great doth the majesty of God appear in overturning the world from time to time, to accomplish his designs, and at last in causing the earth and heavens to flee away, for the advancement of the glory of his kingdom!

VII. From what has been said, we may see the glorious *wisdom* of God. It shows the wisdom of God in creating the world, in that he has created it for such an excellent use, to accomplish in it so glorious a work. And it shows the wisdom of divine Providence, that he brings such great good out of such great evil, in making the fall and ruin of mankind, which in itself is so sorrowful and deplorable, an occasion of accomplishing such a glorious work as redemption, and of erecting such a glorious building, whose top should reach unto heaven, and of bringing his elect to a state of such unspeakable happiness. And how glorious doth the wisdom of God appear in that long course and series of great changes in the world, in bringing such order out of confusion, in so frustrating the most subtle machinations, and in causing the greatest works of Satan, those in which he has most glorified himself, to be wholly turned into occasions of so much the more glorious triumph of his Son Jesus Christ! And how wonderful is the wisdom of God, in bringing all such manifold and various changes and overturnings in the world to such a glorious period at last, and in so directing all the wheels of providence by his skilful hand, that every one of them conspires, as the manifold wheels of a most curious machine, at last to strike out such an excellent issue, such a manifestation of the divine glory, such happiness to his people, and such a glorious and everlasting kingdom to his Son!

VIII. From what has been said, we may see the stability of God's *mercy* and *faithfulness* to his people; how he never forsakes his inheritance, and remembers his covenant to them through all generations. Now we may see what reason there was for the words of the text, "The moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but my righteousness shall endure for ever and ever, and my salvation from generation to generation." And now we may see abundant reason for that name of God which he reveals to Moses, Exod. iii. 14. "And God said unto Moses, *I am that I am:*" i. e. I am the same that I was when I entered into covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and ever shall be the same: I shall keep covenant for ever: I am self-sufficient, all-sufficient, and immutable.

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And now we may see the truth of Psa. xxxvi. 5, 6. "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens: and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep." And if we consider what has been said, we need not wonder that the Psalmist, in the 136th Psalm, so often repeats this, *For his mercy endureth for ever:* as if he were in an ecstasy at the consideration of the perpetuity of God's mercy to his church, delighted to think of it, and knew not how but continually to express it. Let us with like pleasure and joy celebrate the everlasting duration of God's mercy and faithfulness to his church and people, and let us be comforted by it under all the dark circumstances of the church of God, and all the uproar and confusions that are in the world, and all the threatenings of the church's enemies. And let us take encouragement earnestly to pray for those glorious things which God has promised to accomplish for his church.

IX. Hence we may learn how *happy* a society the church of Christ is. For all this great work is for them. Christ undertook it for their sakes, and for their sakes he carries it on; it is because he has loved them with an everlasting love. For their sakes he overturns states and kingdoms. For their sakes he shakes heaven and earth. He gives men for them, and people for their life. Since they have been precious in God's sight, they have been honourable; and therefore he first gives the blood of his own Son, and then, gives the blood of all their enemies, many thousands and millions, all nations that stand in their way, as a sacrifice to their good.

For their sakes he made the world, and for their sakes he will destroy it; for their sakes he built heaven, and for their sakes he makes his angels ministering spirits. Therefore the apostle says, 1 Cor. iii. 21, &c. "All things are yours: whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours." How blessed is this people who are redeemed from among men, and are the first fruits unto God, and to the Lamb; who have God in all ages for their protection and help! Deut. xxxiii. 29. "Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

Let who will prevail now, let the enemies of the church exalt themselves as much as they will, these are the people that shall finally prevail. The last kingdom shall finally be theirs; the kingdom shall finally be given into their hands, and shall not be left to other people. We have seen to what a blessed issue things shall finally be brought, and what glory

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they shall arrive at, and remain in possession of, for ever and ever; after all the kingdoms of the world are come to an end, and the earth is removed, and mountains are carried into the depth of the sea, or where the sea was, and this lower earth shall all be dissolved. O happy people, and blessed society! Well may they spend an eternity in praises and hallelujahs to him who hath loved them, and will love them to eternity.

X. And, lastly, hence all wicked men, all that are in a Christless condition, may see their exceeding *misery*. You that are such, whoever you are, shall have no part or lot in this matter. You are never the better for any of these things: yea, your guilt is but so much the greater, and the misery you are exposed to so much the more dreadful. You are some of those against whom God, in the progress of the work, exercises so much manifest wrath; some of those enemies who are liable to be made Christ's footstool, to be ruled with a rod of iron, and to be dashed in pieces. You are some of the seed of the serpent, to bruise the head of which is one great design of all this work. Whatever glorious things God accomplishes for his church, they will not be glorious to you. The most glorious times of the church are always the most dismal to the wicked and impenitent. (Isa. lxvi. 14.)——And so we find, wherever glorious things are foretold concerning the church, there terrible things are foretold concerning the wicked, its enemies. So it ever has been in remarkable deliverances wrought for the church; there has been also a remarkable execution of wrath upon its enemies. When God delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt; at the same time he remarkably poured out his wrath on Pharaoh and the Egyptians. When he brought them into Canaan by Joshua, and gave them that good land, he remarkably executed wrath upon the Canaanites. When they were delivered out of their Babylonish captivity, signal vengeance was inflicted on the Babylonians. When the Gentiles were called, and the elect of God were saved by the preaching of the apostles, Jerusalem and the persecuting Jews were destroyed in a most awful manner. I might observe the same concerning the glory accomplished to the church in the days of Constantine, at the overthrow of Satan's visible kingdom in the downfal of Antichrist, and at the day of judgment. In all these instances, and especially in the last, there have been, or will be, exhibited most awful tokens of the divine wrath against the wicked.

God will indeed make use of you in this affair; but it will be for the glory of his justice, and not of his mercy. The enemies of God are reserved for the triumph of Christ's glorious power in overcoming and punishing them. You are some of those who shall be consumed with this accursed world after the day of judgment, when Christ and his church shall

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triumphantly and gloriously ascend to heaven.—Therefore let all who are in a Christless condition seriously consider these things, and not be like the foolish people of the old world, who would not take warning, when Noah told them, that the Lord was about to bring a flood of waters upon the earth; or like the people of Sodom, who would not regard, when Lot told them, that God would destroy that city, and would not flee from the wrath to come, and so were consumed in that terrible destruction.

And now I would say, to conclude my whole discourse on this subject, "These sayings are faithful and true, and blessed is he that keepeth these sayings. Behold, Christ cometh quickly, and his reward is with him, to render to every man according as his work shall be: And he that is unjust, shall be unjust still; and he that is filthy, shall be filthy still; and he that is holy, shall be holy still. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city: for without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. He that testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly.—Amen; even so come Lord Jesus."

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MEN NATURALLY

ARE

GOD'S ENEMIES.

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MEN

NATURALLY GOD's ENEMIES.

ROMANS v. 10.

For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.

THE apostle, from the beginning of the epistle, to the beginning of this chapter, had insisted on the doctrine of justification by faith alone. In this chapter he goes on to consider the benefits that are consequent on justification, *viz.* Peace with God, present happiness, and hope of glory. Peace with God is mentioned in the first verse; *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* In the following verses he speaks of present blessedness, and hope of glory. *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* —And concerning this benefit, the hope of glory, the apostle particularly takes notice of two things, *viz.* the blessed nature of this hope, and the sure ground of it.

1. He insists on the *blessed nature* of this hope, in that it enables us to glory in tribulations. This excellent nature of true Christian hope is described in the following words, (ver. 3—5.) *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.* As if he had said, Through hope of a blessed reward, that will abundantly more than make up for all *tribulation*, we are enabled to bear tribulation with *patience;* patiently bearing, and patiently waiting for the reward. And patience works *experience;* for when we thus bear tribulation with patient waiting for the reward, this brings experience of the earnest of the reward, *viz.* the earnest of the Spirit, in our feeling the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. So that our hope does not make us ashamed: it is not disappointed; for in the midst of

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our tribulation, we experience those blessed incomes of the Spirit in our souls, that make even a time of tribulation sweet to us; and is such an earnest as abundantly confirms our hope; and so experience works hope.

2. The apostle takes notice of the *sure ground* there is for this hope; or the abundant evidence we have, that we shall obtain the glory hoped for, in that peace we have with God, by our justification through Christ's blood. For while we were without strength, in due time Christ died for us; even while we were ungodly and sinners, enemies to God and Christ. (See ver. 6—10.) The apostle's argument is exceeding clear and strong. If God has done already so great a thing for us, as to give us Christ to die and shed his precious blood for us, which was vastly the greatest thing, we need not doubt but that he will bestow life upon us. It is but a small thing for God actually to bestow eternal life, after it is purchased; to what it is for him to give his own Son to die, in order to purchase it. The giving Christ to purchase it, was virtually all: it included the whole grace of God in salvation. When Christ had purchased salvation at such a dear rate, all the difficulty was got through, all was virtually over and done. It is a small thing, in comparison, for God to bestow salvation, after it has been thus purchased at a full price. Sinners who are justified by the death of Christ, are already virtually saved; the thing is, as it were, done: what remains, is no more than the necessary consequence of what is done. Christ when he died made an end of sin: and when he rose from the dead, he did virtually rise with the elect: he brought them up from death with him, and ascended into heaven with them. And therefore, when this is already done, and we are thus reconciled to God through the death of his Son, we need not fear but that we shall be saved by his life. The love of God appears much more in his giving his Son to die for sinners, than in giving eternal life after Christ's death.

The giving of Christ to die for us is here spoken of as a much greater thing, than the actual bestowment of life; because this is all that has any difficulty in it.—When God did this for us, he did it for us, as sinners and enemies. But in actually bestowing salvation on us after we are justified, we are not looked upon as sinners, but as perfectly righteous persons: he beholds no iniquity in us. We are no more enemies, but reconciled. When God gave Christ to die for the elect, he looked on them as they are in themselves; but in actually bestowing eternal life, he looks on them as they are in Christ.

There are *three* epithets used in the text and context, as appertaining to sinners as they are in themselves, verse 6—8.

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They are *without strength*, they cannot help themselves.—They are *ungodly* or sinners,—and they are *enemies*: as in the text.—NATURAL MEN ARE GOD'S ENEMIES.

God, though the creator of all things, yet has some enemies in the world.—Men in general will own, that they are sinners. There are few, if any, whose consciences are so blinded as not to be sensible they have been guilty of sin. And most sinners will own that they have bad hearts. They will own that they do not love God, so much as they should do; that they are not so thankful as they ought to be for mercies; and that in many things they fail. And yet few of them are sensible that they are God's enemies. They do not see how they can be truly so called; for they are not sensible that they wish God any hurt, or endeavour to do him any.

But we see that the scripture speaks of them as enemies to God. So in our text, and elsewhere; *And you that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works.* Col. i. 21. *The carnal mind is enmity against God.* Rom. viii. 7. —And that all natural or unregenerate men are indeed such, is what I shall endeavour now particularly to shew. Which I propose to do in the following method. Particularly in what respects they are enemies to God.—To how great a degree they are enemies—and why they are enemies. Then I shall answer some objections.

SECT. I.

In what respects Natural Men are God's Enemies.

1. THEIR enmity appears in their judgments, their natural relish, their wills, affections, and practice. They have a very mean esteem of God. Men are ready to entertain a good esteem of those with whom they are friends: they are apt to think highly of their qualities, to give them their due praises; and if there be defects, to cover them. But of those to whom they are enemies, they are disposed to have mean thoughts; they are apt to entertain a dishonourable opinion of them: they will be ready to look contemptibly upon any thing that is praise-worthy in them.

So it is with natural men towards God. They entertain very low and contemptible thoughts of God. Whatever honour and respect they may pretend, and make a shew of towards God, if their practice be examined, it will shew, that they certainly look upon him as a Being, that is but little to be regarded. The language of their hearts is, *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?* Exod. v. 2. *What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we*

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have if we pray unto him? Job xxi. 15. They count him worthy neither to be loved nor feared. They dare not behave with that slight and disregard towards one of their fellow-creatures, when a little raised above them in power and authority, as they dare, and do towards God. They value one of their equals much more than God, and are ten times more afraid of offending such, than of displeasing the God that made them. They cast such exceeding contempt on God, as to prefer every vile lust before him. And every worldly enjoyment is set higher in their esteem, than God. A morsel of meat, or a few pence of worldly gain, is preferred before him. God is set last and lowest in the esteem of natural men.

2. They are enemies in the *natural relish* of their souls. They have an inbred distaste and disrelish of God's perfections. God is not such a being as they would have. Though they are ignorant of God; yet from what they hear of him, and from what is manifest by the light of nature, they do not like him. By his being endowed with such attributes as he is, they have an aversion to him. They hear God is an infinitely holy, pure, and righteous Being, and they do not like him upon this account; they have no relish of such qualifications: they take no delight in contemplating them. It would be a mere task, a bondage to a natural man, to be obliged to set himself to contemplate those attributes of God. They see no manner of beauty or loveliness, nor taste any sweetness in them. And on account of their distaste of these perfections, they dislike all his other attributes. They have greater aversion to him because he is omniscient and knows all things; and because his omniscience is an holy omniscience. They are not pleased that he is omnipotent, and can do whatever he pleases; because it is a holy omnipotence. They are enemies even to his mercy, because it is a holy mercy. They do not like his immutability, because by this he never will be otherwise than he is, an infinitely holy God.

It is from this disrelish that natural men have of the attributes of God, that they do not love to have much to do with God. The natural tendency of the heart of man is to fly from God, and keep at a distance from him, as far off as possible.—A natural man is averse to communion with God, and is naturally disinclined to those exercises of religion, wherein he has immediately to do with him. It is said of wicked men, Psal. x. 4, *God is not in all their thoughts.* It is evident, that the mind of man is naturally averse to thinking about God: and hence if any thoughts of him be suggested to the mind, they soon go away; such thoughts are not apt to rest in the minds of natural men. If any thing is said to them of God, they are apt to forget it: it is like seed that falls upon

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the hard path, the fowls of the air soon take it away: or like seed that falls upon a rock. Other things will stick; but divine things rebound: and if they were cast into the mind, they meet with that there which soon thrusts them out again: they meet with no suitable entertainment, but are soon chased away.

Hence also it is, that natural men are with difficulty persuaded to be constant in the duty of secret prayer. They would not be so averse to spending a quarter of an hour, night and morning, in some bodily labour; but it is because they are averse to work, wherein they have so immediately to do with God; and they naturally love to keep at a distance from him.

3. Their *wills* are contrary to his will. God's will and theirs are exceeding cross the one to the other. God wills those things that they hate, and are most averse to; and they will those things that God hates. Hence they oppose God in their wills: there is a dreadful, violent, and obstinate opposition of the will of natural men, to the will of God.

They are very opposite to the commands of God. It is from the enmity of the will, (Rom. vii. 7,) that *the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* Hence natural men are enemies to God's government. They are not loyal subjects, but enemies to God, considered as Lord of the world. They are entire enemies to God's authority.

4. They are enemies to God in their *affections.* There is in every natural man a seed of malice against God. And it often dreadfully breaks forth. Though it may in great measure lie hid in secure times, when God lets men alone, and they meet with no great disturbance of body or mind; yet, if God does but touch men in their consciences, by manifesting to them a little of his wrath for their sins, this oftentimes brings out the principle of malice against him. This is exercised in dreadful heart-risings, inward wranglings and quarrellings, and blasphemous thoughts: wherein the heart is like a viper, hissing and spitting poison at God. And however free from it the heart may seem to be, when let alone and secure, yet a very little thing will set it in a rage. Temptations will shew what is in the heart. The alteration of a man's circumstances will often discover the heart. Pharaoh had no more natural enmity against God than other men; and if other natural men had been in Pharaoh's circumstances, the same corruptions would have put forth themselves in as dreadful a manner. The scribes and Pharisees had naturally no more malice in their hearts against Christ than other men; and other natural men would, in their case, and having as little restraint, exercise as much malice against Christ as they did. When wicked men come to be cast into hell, then their malice against God will

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appear. Then their hearts will appear as full of malice, as hell is full of fire. But when wicked men come to be in hell, there will be no new corruptions put into their heart; but only old ones will then break forth without restraint. That is all the difference between a wicked man on earth, and a wicked man in hell, that in hell there will be more to stir up the exercise of corruption, and less to restrain it than on earth: but there will be no new corruption put in. A wicked man will have no principle of corruption in hell, but what he carried to hell with him. There are now the seeds of all the malice that will be exercised then. The malice of damned spirits is but a branch of the root, that is in the hearts of natural men now. A natural man has a heart, like the heart of a devil; only corruption is more under restraint in man than in devils.

5. They are enemies in their *practice*. *They walk contrary to him.* In their enmity against God, they are exceeding active. They are engaged in war against God. Indeed they cannot injure God, he is so much above them; but yet they do what they can. They oppose themselves to his honour and glory: they oppose themselves to the interest of his kingdom in the world: they oppose themselves to the will and command of God: and oppose him in his government. They oppose God in his works, and in his declared designs; while he is doing one work, they are doing the contrary. God seeks one thing, and they seek directly the contrary. They list under Satan's banner, and are his willing soldiers in opposing the kingdom of God.

SECT. II.

The Degree of Men's Natural Enmity to God.

I NOW proceed to say something with respect to the *degree* of this enmity: tending in some measure to shew, how great enemies to God are natural men.

1. They have *no love* to God; their enmity is mere enmity without any mixture of love. A natural man is wholly destitute of any principle of love to God, and therefore never had the least exercise of this love. Some natural men have better tempers than others; and some are better educated than others; and some live a great deal more soberly than others: but one has no more love to God than another; for none have the least spark of that. The heart of a natural man is as destitute of love to God, as a dead, stiff, cold corpse is of vital heat. John v. 43. *I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.*

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2. Every *faculty* and *principle* of action is wholly under the dominion of enmity against God. The nature of man is wholly infected with this enmity against God. He is tainted with it throughout, in all his faculties and principles. And not only so, but every faculty is entirely and perfectly subdued under it, and enslaved to it. This enmity against God, has the absolute possession of man. The apostle Paul, speaking of what he was naturally, says, Rom. vii. 14, *I am carnal, sold under sin.*

The *understanding* is under the reigning power of this enmity against God, so that it is entirely darkened and blinded with regard to the glory and excellency of God. The *will* is wholly under the reigning power of it. All the *affections* are governed by enmity against God: there is not one affection, nor one desire, that a natural man has, or that he is ever stirred up to act from, but what contains in it enmity against God. A natural man is as full of enmity against God, as any viper, or any venomous beast, is full of poison.

3. The power of the enmity of natural men against God, is so great, that it is *insuperable* by any *finite* power. It has too great and strong a possession of the heart, to be overcome by any created power. Indeed, a natural man never sincerely strives to root out his enmity against God; his endeavours are hypocritical: he delights in his enmity, and chooses it. Neither can others do it, though they sincerely, and to their utmost, endeavour to overcome this enmity. If godly friends and neighbours labour to persuade them to cast away their enmity, and become friends to God, they cannot persuade them to it. Though ministers use never so many arguments and entreaties, and set forth the loveliness of God; tell them of the goodness of God to them, hold forth God's own gracious invitations, and intreat them never so earnestly to cast off their opposition, and be reconciled; yet they cannot overcome it; still they will be as bad enemies to God, as ever they were.—The tongue of men or of angels cannot persuade them to relinquish their opposition to God. Miracles will not do it.—How many miracles did the children of Israel see in the wilderness! yet their enmity against God remained; as appeared by their often murmuring. And how often did Christ use miracles to this end without effect, but the Jews obstinately stood out. Matt. xxiii. 37. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." And how great did the enmity of these people appear to be after all; how spiteful and venomous were their hearts towards Christ, as appears by their cruel treatment of him, in his last sufferings!

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4. They are *mortal* enemies to God; *i. e.* they have that enmity in their hearts, that strikes at the life of God. A man may be no friend to another, and may have an ill spirit towards him; and yet not be his mortal enemy: his enmity will be satisfied with something short of the death of the person. But it is not so with natural men, with respect to God: they are mortal enemies. Their imbecility is no argument that this is not the tendency of the principle.

Natural men are enemies to the dominion of God; and their nature shews their good will to dethrone him if they could! Yea, they are enemies to the being of God, and would be glad if there was no God. And therefore it necessarily follows, that they would cause that there should be none, if they could. Psalm xiv. 1. *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.* This implies not only an aptness to question the being of God; but, that he inclines it should be so. His *heart* says, *i. e.* his *inclination* says. The words in the original are, "The fool hath said in his heart, no God." That is, I would have none, I do not desire any, I wish there was none; that would suit my inclination best. Let the world be emptied of a God, he stands in my way. And hence he is an Atheist in his heart.

The viper's poison is deadly poison; and when he bites he seeks the precious life. And men are in this respect a generation of vipers. Their poison, which is enmity against God, seeks the life of God. Matt. iii. 7. *O generation of vipers.*—Psalm. lviii. 3, 4. *The wicked are estranged from the womb—Their poison is like the poison of a serpent.* Deut. xxxii. 32, 33. *For their vine is the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are the grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter. Their vine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps.* The divine nature being immortal, and infinitely out of our reach, there is no other trial possible, whether the enmity that is naturally in the heart against God, be mortal or no, but only for God to take on him the human nature, and become man; so as to come within man's reach. There can be no other experiment. And what has been the event? Why, when once God became man, and came down to dwell here, among such vipers as fallen men, they hated and persecuted him; and never desisted till they had imbrued their hands in his blood. There was a multitude of them that appeared combined in this design. Nothing would do, but he must be put to death. All cry out, *Crucify him, crucify him, Away with him.* They had rather Barabbas, who greatly deserved death, should live, than he should not die. Nothing would restrain them from it; even all his preaching, and all his miracles: but they would kill him. And it was not the ordinary kind of execution that would satisfy them: but it must be the most cruel

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and most ignominious they possibly could invent. And they aggravated it as much as they could, by mocking him, and spitting on him, and scourging him. This shews what the nature and tendency of man's enmity against God is; here it appeared in its true colours.

5. Natural men are greater enemies to God, than they are to any other being whatsoever. Natural men may be very great enemies to their fellow-creatures; but not so great as they are to God. There is no other being that so much stands in sinners' way, in those things that they chiefly set their hearts upon, as God. Men are wont to hate their enemies in proportion to two things, *viz.* their opposition to what they look upon to be their interest,—and their power and ability. A great and powerful enemy, will be more hated, than one who is weak and impotent. But none is so powerful as God.

Man's enmity to others may be got over: time may wear it out, and they may be reconciled. But natural men, without a mighty work of God to change their hearts, will never get over their enmity against God. They are greater enemies to God, than they are to the devil. Yea, they treat the devil as their friend and master, and join with him against God.—John viii. 44. *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning.*

SECT. III.

On what Account are Men Enemies to God.

The general reason is, That God is opposite to them in the worship of their idols. The apostacy of man summarily consists in departing from the true God, to idols; forsaking his Creator, and setting up other things in his room. When God at first created man, he was united to his creator; the God that made him was his God. The true God was the object of his highest respect, and had the possession of his heart. Love to God was the principle in his heart, that ruled over all other principles; and every thing in the soul was wholly in subjection to it. But when man fell, he departed from the true God, and the union that was between his heart and his Creator was broken: he wholly lost his principle of love to God. And henceforward man clave to other gods. He gave that respect to the creature, which is due to the Creator.—When God ceased to be the object of his supreme love and respect, other things of course became the objects of it.

Man will necessarily have something that he respects as

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his god. If man do not give his highest respect to the God that made him, there will be something else that has the possession of it. Men will either worship the true God, or some idol: it is impossible it should be otherwise; something will have the heart of man. And that which a man gives his heart to, may be called his god; and therefore when man, by the fall, extinguished all love to the true God, he set up the creature in his room. For having lost his esteem and love of the true God, and set up other gods in his room, and in opposition to him; and God still demanding their worship, and opposing them, enmity necessarily follows.

That which a man chooses for his god, he sets his heart mainly upon. And nothing will so soon excite enmity, as opposition in that which is dearest. A man will be the greatest enemy to him who opposes him in what he chooses for his god: he will look on none as standing so much in his way, as he that would deprive him of his god. Judg. xviii. 24. *Ye have taken away my gods; and what have I more?* A man, in this respect, cannot serve two masters, that stand in competition for his service. And not only, if he serves one, he cannot serve the other; but if he cleaves to one, he will necessarily hate the other. Matt. vi. 24. "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." And this is the very reason that men hate God. In this case it is, as when two kings set up in one kingdom, in opposition one to the other; and they both challenge the same throne, and are competitors for the same crown: they who are loyal, hearty subjects to the one, will necessarily be enemies to the other. As that which is a man's god, is the object of his highest love; so that God who chiefly opposes him in it, must be the object of his greatest hatred.

The gods which a natural man worships, instead of the God that made him, are himself and the world. He has withdrawn his esteem and honour from God, and proudly exalts himself. As Satan was not willing to be in subjection, and therefore rebelled, and set up himself; so a natural man, in the proud and high thoughts he has of himself, sets up himself upon God's throne. He gives his heart to the world, worldly riches, worldly pleasures, and worldly honours; they have the possession of that regard which is due to God. The apostle sums up all the idolatry of wicked men in their love of the world. 1 John, ii. 15, 16. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." And the apostle James observes, that a man must necessarily be

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the enemy of the true God, if he be a friend of the world: "Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God." Jam. iv. 4.

All the sin that men commit, is what they do in the service of their idols; there is no one act of sin, but what is an act of service to some false god. And therefore wherein soever God opposes sin in them, he is opposite to their worship of their idols: on which account they are his enemies. God opposes them in their service of their idols, in the following respects.

1. He manifests his utter *abhorrence* of their attachment to their idols. Their idols are what they love above all things: they would by no means part with them. This wickedness is sweet unto them, Job. xx. 12, If you take them away, what have they more? If they lose their idols, they lose their all.—To rend away their idols from them, would be more grievous to them, than to rend body and soul asunder; it is like rending their heart in twain. They love their idolatry: but God does not approve of it, but exceedingly hates it: he will by no means be reconciled to it; and therefore they hate him. God declares an infinite hatred of every act they do in the service of their false gods. He declares himself to be a holy and a jealous God; a God who is very jealous of his own honour, and that greatly abhors giving that honour to another.

2. He utterly *forbids* their cleaving to those idols, and all the service that they do them. He not only shews that he dislikes it, but he utterly forbids it; and demands that they should worship him; serve him only, and give their hearts wholly to him; without tolerating any competitor. He allows them to serve their idols in no degree; but requires them to cast them away *utterly*, and pay no more worship to them, at any time. He requires a *final* parting with their idols. Not only that they should refrain from them for awhile, but cast them away for ever; and never gratify their idolatrous respect to them any more. This is so exceeding contrary to them, and what they are so averse to, that they are enemies to God for it. They cannot endure God's commands, because they forbid all that in which their hearts are so engaged. And as they hate God's commands, so they hate him whose commands they are.

3. He *threatens* them with everlasting damnation for their service of their idols. He threatens them for their *past* idolatry. He threatens them with his eternal wrath, for their having departed from him, and their having chosen to themselves other gods. He threatens them for that *disposition* they have in their hearts to cleave to other gods: he threatens the least degrees of that respect which they have in their hearts to

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their idols. He manifests that he will not tolerate any regard to them, but has fixed eternal death as the wages of every degree of it. And he will not release them from their guilt; he holds them to their obligations; and he will accept of no atonement that they can make. He will not forgive them for whatever they do in religion; whatever pains they take; whatever tears they shed. He will accept of no money or price that they have to offer.

And he threatens every *future* act of their idolatry. He not only forbids them ever to be guilty of the least act, but forbids them on pain of eternal damnation. So strictly does God prohibit them from the service of their beloved idols! He threatens them with everlasting wrath for all exercises of inordinate love of worldly profit; for all manifestations of inordinate regard to worldly pleasures, or worldly honours. He threatens them with everlasting torments for their self-exaltation. He requires them to deny and renounce themselves, and to abase themselves at his feet, on pain of bearing his wrath to all eternity.

The strictness of God's law is a principal cause of man's enmity against God. If God were one that did not so much hate sin; if he would allow them in the gratification of their lusts, in some degree; and his threatenings were not so awful against all criminal indulgence; if his threatenings were not so absolute; if his displeasure could be appeased by a few tears, a little reformation, or the like; they would not be so great enemies, nor hate him so much as they do. But God shews himself to be an implacable enemy to their idols, and has threatened everlasting wrath, infinite calamity, for all that they do in the service of their lusts; and this makes them irreconcileable enemies to him.

For this reason, the scribes and Pharisees were such bitter enemies to Christ; because he shewed himself to be such an enemy to their pride, conceit of their own wisdom, self-righteousness, and inordinate affection of their own honour, which was their god. Natural men are enemies to God, because he is so opposite to them, in that in which they place their all. If you go to take away that which is very dear to a man, nothing will provoke him more. God is infinitely opposite to that in which natural men place all their delight, and all their happiness. He is an enemy to that which natural men value as their greatest honour and highest dignity; and to which they wholly trust, *viz.* their own righteousness.

Hence natural men are greater enemies to God, than they are to any other being. Some of their fellow-creatures may stand very much in their way, with regard to some things on which they set their hearts; but God opposes them with respect to ALL their idols, and his opposition to them is infi-

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nitely great. None of our fellow-creatures ever oppose us in any of our interests so much as God opposes wicked men in their idolatry. His infinite opposition is manifested by his threatening an infinite punishment, *viz.* his dreadful wrath to all eternity, misery without end. Hence we need not wonder that natural men are enemies to God.

SECT. IV.

The Objection, that Men are not conscious of this Enmity, answered.

NATURAL men do not generally conceive themselves to be so bad: they have not this notion of themselves, that they are enemies to God. And therefore, when they hear such doctrine as this taught them, they stand ready to make objections. Some may be ready to say, "I do not know, I am not sensible, that I hate God, and have a mortal enmity against him. I feel no such thing in myself, and if I have such enmity, why do not I feel it? If I am a mortal enemy, why should not I know it better than any body else? How can others see what is in my heart, better than I myself? If I hate one of my fellow-creatures, I can feel it inwardly working." To such an objection I would answer,

1. If you do but observe yourself, and search your own heart, unless you are strangely blinded, you may be sensible of those things, wherein enmity does fundamentally consist. Particularly, you may be sensible that you have at least had a low and contemptible estimation of God; and that, in your esteem, you set the trifles and vanities of this world far above him; so as to regard the enjoyment of these things far above the enjoyment of God, and to value these things better than his love.—And you may be sensible that you despise the *authority* of God, and value his commands and his honour but very little. Or if by some means you have blinded yourself, so as to think you do regard them now, doubtless you can look back and see that you have not regarded them. You may be sensible that you have had a disrelish and aversion towards God; an opposition to thinking of him; so that it would have been a very uncomfortable task to have been confined to that exercise for any time. The vanities of the world, at the same time, have been very pleasing to you; and you have been all swallowed up in them, while you have been averse to the things of religion. If you look into your heart, it is there plain to be seen, that there is an enmity in your *will*, that it is contrary to God's will, for you have been opposing the will of God all your life long.—These things are

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plain; it is nothing but some great delusion that can hide them from you. These are the foundation of all enmity; and if these things be in you, all the rest that we have spoken of will follow of course.

2. One reason why you have not more sensibly felt the exercises of malice against God, is, that your enmity is now exercised partly in your unbelief of God's being; and this prevents its appearing in other ways. Man has naturally a principle of Atheism in him: an indisposition to realize God's being, and a disposition to doubt of it. The being of God does not ordinarily seem real to natural men. All the discoveries that there are of God's being in his works, will not overcome the principle of Atheism in the heart. And though they seem in some measure to be rationally convinced, yet it does not appear real; the conviction is faint, there is no strong conviction impressed on the mind, that there is a God: and oftentimes they are ready to think that there is none. Now this will prevent the exercise of this enmity, which otherwise would be felt; particularly, it may be an occasion of there not being sensible exercises of hatred.

It may in some measure be thus illustrated: If you had a rooted malice against another man, a principle that had been long established there, and if you should hear that he was dead, the sensible workings of your malice would not be felt, as when you realized it that he was alive. But if you should afterwards hear the news contradicted, and perceive that your enemy was still alive; you would feel the same workings of hatred that you did before. And thus your not realizing the fact, that God has a being, may prevent those sensible workings of hatred, that otherwise you would have. If wicked men in this world were sensible of the reality of God's being, as the wicked are in another, they would feel more of that hatred, which men in another world do. The exercise of corruption in one way, may, and often does prevent it working in other ways. As covetousness may prevent the exercise of pride, so Atheism may prevent malice; and yet it may be no argument of there being any less enmity in the heart; for it is the same enmity, working in another way. The same enmity that in this world works by Atheism, will in another world, where there will be no room for Atheism, work by malice and blasphemy. The same mortal enmity which, if you saw there was a God, might make you to *wish* there were none, may now dispose and incline you to think there *is* none. Men are very often apt to think things are, as they would have them to be. The same principle disposes you to think God has no existence, which, if you knew he had, would dispose you, if it were possible, to dispossess him of it.

3. If you think that there is a God, yet you do not realise

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it, that he is such a God, as he really is. You do not realize it, that he is so holy as he is; that he has such a hatred of sin as indeed he has; that he is so just a God as he is, who will by no means clear the guilty. But that in the Psalms is applicable to you: *These things hast thou done, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.* Psalm l. 21. So that your Atheism appears in this, as well as in thinking there is no God. So that your objection arises from this, that you do not find such a sensible hatred against that God which you have formed, to suit yourself; a God that you like better than the true God. But this is no argument that you have not bitter enmity against the true God; for it was your enmity against the true God, and your not liking him, that has put you upon forming up another in your imagination, that you like better. It is your enmity against those attributes of God's holiness and justice, and the like, that has put you upon conceiting another, who is not so holy as he is, and does not hate sin so much, and will not be so strictly just in punishing it; and whose wrath against sin is not so terrible.

But if you were sensible of the vanity of your own conceits, and that God was not such an one as you have imagined; but that he is, as he is indeed, an infinitely holy, just, sin hating and sin revenging God, who will not tolerate nor endure the worship of idols, you would be much more liable to feel the sensible exercises of enmity against him, than you are now. And this experience confirms. For we see that when men come to be under convictions, and to be made sensible that God is not as they have heretofore imagined; but that he is such a jealous, sin hating God, and whose wrath against sin is so dreadful, they are much more apt to have sensible exercises of enmity against him than before.

4. Your having always been taught that God is infinitely above you, and out of your reach, has prevented your enmity being exercised in those ways, that otherwise it would have been. And hence your enmity has not been exercised in revengeful thoughts; because revenge has never found any room here; it has never found any handle to take hold of; there has been no conception of any such thing, and hence it has lain still. A serpent will not bite, or spit poison at that which it sees at a great distance; which if it saw near, would do it immediately. Opportunity often shews what men are, whether friends or enemies. Opportunity to do puts men in mind of doing; wakens up such principles as lay dormant before. Opportunity stirs up desire to do, where there was before a disposition, that without opportunity would have lain still. If a man has had an old grudge against another, and has a fair opportunity to be revenged, this will revive his malice, and waken up a desire of revenge.

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If a great and sovereign prince injures a poor man, and what he does is looked upon as very cruel, that will not ordinarily stir up passionate revenge, because he is so much above him, and out of his reach. Many a man has appeared calm and meek, when he has had no power in his hands, and has not appeared, either to himself or others, to have any disposition to cruel acts; yet afterwards when he came to have opportunity by unexpected advancement, or otherwise, has appeared like a ravenous wolf, or devouring lion. So it was with Hazael. "And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child. And Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The Lord hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria." 2 Kings viii. 12, 13. Hazael was then a servant; he had no power in his hands to do as he pleased; and so his cruel disposition had lain hid, and he did not himself imagine that it was there: but afterwards, when he became king of Syria, and was absolute, having none to controul him; then it broke out and appeared, and he did as the prophet had foretold. He committed those very acts of cruelty, that he thought it was not in his heart to do. It was want of opportunity that made the difference. It was all in his heart before; he was such a dog *then* as to do this thing, but only had not opportunity. And therefore when he seems surprised that the prophet should say so of him, all the reason the prophet gives is, "The Lord hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria."

Some natural men are such "dogs" as to do things, if they had opportunity, which they do not imagine it is in their hearts to do. You object against your having a mortal hatred against God; that you never felt any desire to dethrone him. But one reason has been, that it has always been conceived so impossible by you. But if the throne of God were within your reach, and you knew it, it would not be safe one hour. Who knows what thoughts would presently arise in your heart by such an opportunity, and what disposition would be raised up in your heart? Who would trust your heart, that there would not presently be such thoughts as these, though they are enough to make one tremble to mention them? "Now I have opportunity to set myself at liberty—that I need not be kept in continual slavery by the strict law of God—Then I may take my liberty to walk in that way I like best, and need not be continually in such slavish fear of God's displeasure. And God has not done well by me in many instances. He has done most unjustly by me, in holding me bound to destruction for

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unbelief, and other things which I cannot help—He has shewn mercy to others, and not to me. I have now an opportunity to deliver myself, and there can be no danger of my being hurt for it. There will be nothing for us to be terrified about, and so keep us in slavery."

Who would trust your heart, that such thoughts would not arise? or others much more horrid and too dreadful to be mentioned! And therefore I forbear. Those natural men are foolishly insensible of what is in their own hearts, who think there would be no danger of any such workings of heart, if they knew they had opportunity.

5. You little consider, how much your having no more of the sensible exercises of hatred to God, is owing to a being restrained by fear. You have always been taught what a dreadful thing it is to hate God, and how terrible his displeasure; that God sees the heart and knows all the thoughts; and that you are in his hands, and he can make you as miserable as he pleases, and as soon as he pleases. And these things have restrained you: and the fear that has risen from them, has kept you from appearing what you are; it has kept down your enmity, and made that serpent afraid to shew its head, as otherwise it would do. If a wrathful man were wholly under the power of an enemy, he would be afraid to exercise his hatred in outward acts, unless it were with great disguise. And if it be supposed that such an enemy, in whose power he was, could see his heart, and know all his thoughts; and apprehended that he would put him to a terrible death, if he saw the workings of malice there, how greatly would this restrain! He would be afraid so much as to believe himself, that he hated his enemy: but there would be all manner of disguise and hypocrisy, and feigning even of thoughts and affections.

Thus your enmity has been kept under *restraint;* and thus it has been from your infancy. You have grown up in it, so that it is become an *habitual* restraint. You dare not so much as think you hate God. If you do exercise hatred, you have a disguise for it, whereby you endeavour even to hide it from your own conscience; and so have all along deceived yourself. Your deceit is very old and habitual: There has been only restraint; not mortification. There has been an enmity against God in its full strength. It has been only restrained, like an enemy that durst not rise up and shew himself.

6. One reason why you have not felt more sensible hatred to God may be, because you have not had much trial of what is in your heart. It may be God has hitherto, in a great measure, let you alone. The enmity that is in men's hearts against God, is like a serpent, which, if it be let alone, lies

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still: but if any body disturbs it, will soon hiss, and be enraged, and shew its serpentine spiteful nature.

Notwithstanding the good opinion you have of yourself, yet a little trial would shew you to be a viper, and your heart would be set all on rage against God. One thing that restrains you now is your hope. You hope to receive many things from God. Your own interest is concerned. So that both hope and fear operate together, to restrain your enmity from sensible exercises. But if once hope were gone, you would soon shew what you were: you would feel your enmity against God in a rage.

7. If you pretend that you do not feel enmity against God, and yet act as an enemy, you may certainly conclude that it is not because you are no enemy; but because you do not know your own heart. Actions are the best interpreters of the disposition: they shew, better than any thing else, what the heart is. It must be because you do not observe your own behaviour, that you question whether you are an enemy to God.

What other account can you give of your own carriage, but only your being God's enemy? What other account can be given of your opposing God in your ways; walking so exceeding contrary to him, contrary to his counsels, contrary to his commands, and contrary to his glory? What other account can be given of your casting so much contempt upon God; your setting him so low; your acting so much against his authority, and against his kingdom and interest in the world? What other account can be given of your so setting your will in opposition to God's will, and that so obstinately, for so long a time, against so many warnings as you have had? What other account can be given of your joining so much with Satan, in the opposition he is making to the kingdom of God in the world? And that you will join with him against God, though it be so much against your own interest, and though you expose yourself by it to everlasting misery?

Such like behaviour in one man towards another, would be sufficient evidence of enmity. If he should be seen to behave thus, and that it was his constant manner, none would want better evidence that he was an enemy to his neighbour. If you yourself had a servant that carried it towards you, as you do towards God, you would not think there was need of any greater evidence of his being your enemy. Suppose your servant should manifest much contempt of you; and disregard your commands as much as you do the commands of God; should go directly contrary, and in many ways act the very reverse of your commands; should seem to set himself in ways that were contrary to your will ob-

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stinately and incorrigibly, without any amendment from your repeated calls, warnings, and threatenings; and should act so cross to you day and night, as you do to God: would he not be justly deemed your enemy? Suppose, further, when you sought one thing, he would seek the contrary; when you did any work, he would, as much as in him lay, undo and destroy that work; and suppose he should continually drive at such ends, as tended to overthrow the ends you aimed at: when you sought to bring to pass any design, he would endeavour to overthrow your design; and set himself as much against your interest, as you do yourself against God's honour. And suppose you should moreover see him, from time to time, with those who were your declared mortal enemies; making them his counsellors, and hearkening to their counsels, as much as you do to Satan's temptations: should you not think you had sufficient evidence that he was your enemy?——Therefore consider seriously your own ways, and weigh your own behaviour. *How canst thou say, I am not polluted?—see thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done.* Jer. ii. 23.

SECT. V.

The Objections, that they shew respect to God, and experience some Religious Affections, answered.

NATURAL men may be ready to object, the *respect* they shew to God, from time to time. This makes many to think that they are far from being such enemies to God. They pray to him in secret, and attend on public worship, and take a great deal of pains to do it in a decent manner. It seems to them that they shew God a great deal of respect: they use many very respectful terms in their prayer: they are respectful in their manner of speaking, their voice, gestures, and the like.—But to this I answer, That all this is done in mere hypocrisy. All this seeming respect is feigned, there is no sincerity in it: there is external respect, but none in the heart: there is a shew, and nothing else. You only cover your enmity with a painted vail. You put on the disguise of a friend, but in your heart you are a mortal enemy. There is external honour, but inward contempt; there is a shew of friendship and regard, but inward hatred. You do but deceive yourself with your shew of respect; and endeavour to deceive God: not considering that God looks not on the outward appearance, but on the heart.—Here consider particularly,

1. That much of that seeming respect which natural

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men shew to God, is owing to their education. They have been taught from their infancy that they ought to shew great respect to God. They have been taught to use respectful language, when speaking about God, and to behave with solemnity, when attending on those exercises of religion, wherein they have to do with him. From their childhood, they have seen that this is the manner of others, when they pray to God, to use reverential expressions and a reverential behaviour before him.

Those who are brought up in places where they have commonly from their infancy, heard men take the name of God in vain, and swear and curse, and blaspheme; they learn to do the same; and it becomes habitual to them. And it is the same way, and no other, that you have learned to behave respectfully towards God; not that you have any more respect to God than they; but they have been brought up one way, and you another. In some parts of the world, men are brought up in the worship of idols of silver, and gold, and wood, and stone, made in the shape of men and beasts. *They say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calf.* Hos. xiii. 2. In some parts of the world, they are brought up to worship serpents, and are taught from their infancy to shew great respect to them. And in some places they are brought up in worshipping the devil, who appears to them in a bodily shape; and to behave with a shew of great reverence and honour towards him. And what respect you shew to God has no better foundation; it comes the same way, and is worth no more.

2. That shew of respect which you make is forced. You come to God, and make a great shew of respect to him, and use very respectful terms, with a reverential tone and manner of speaking; and your countenance is grave and solemn: you put on an humble aspect; and use humble, respectful postures, out of fear. You are afraid that God will execute his wrath upon you, and so you feign a great deal of respect, that he may not be angry with you. *Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.* Ps. lxvi. 3. In the original it is, *Shall thine enemies lie to thee.* It is rendered therefore in the margin, *shall yield feigned obedience unto thee.* All that you do in religion is forced and feigned. Through the greatness of God's power, you yield feigned obedience. You are in God's power, and he is able to destroy you; and so you feign a great deal of respect to him, that he might not destroy you. As one might do towards an enemy that had taken him captive, though he at the same time would gladly make his escape, if he could, by taking away the life of him who had taken him captive.

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3. It is not real respect that moves you to behave so towards God: you do it because you hope you shall get by it. It is respect to yourself, and not respect to God, that moves you. You hope to move God by it to bestow the rewards of his children. You are like the Jews who followed Christ, and called him Rabbi, and would make him a king. Not that they honoured him so much in their hearts, as to think him worthy of the honour of a king; or that they had the respect of sincere subjects; but they did it for the sake of the loaves. *Jesus perceived that they would come and make him a king. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, how camest thou hither? Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because you saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.* John vi. 15, 25, 26.

These things do not argue but that you are implacable enemies to God. If you examine your prayers and other duties, your own consciences will tell you, that the seeming respect which you have shewn to God in them, has been only in hypocrisy. Oftentimes you have set forth in your prayers, that God was a great, a glorious, and an infinitely holy God, as if you greatly honoured him on the account of these attributes; and, at the same time, you had no sense in your heart of the greatness and glory of God, or of any excellency in his holiness. Your own consciences will tell you, that you have often pretended to be thankful; you have told God, that you thanked him you was alive, and thanked him for various mercies, when you have not found the least jot of thankfulness in your heart. And so you have told God of your own unworthiness, and set forth what a vile creature you was; when you have had no humble sense of your own unworthiness.

If these forementioned restraints were thrown off, you would soon throw off all your shew of respect. Take away fear, and a regard to your own interest, and there would soon be an end to all those appearances of love, honour, and reverence, which now you make. All these things are not at all inconsistent with the most implacable enmity. The devil himself made a shew of respect to Christ, when he was afraid that he was going to torment him; and when he hoped to persuade Christ to spare him longer. *When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.* Luke viii. 28.

Some may perhaps object against this doctrine of their being God's enemies, the *religious affections* they have sometimes experienced. They may be ready to say, That when they have come before God in prayer, they have not only

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used respectful terms and gestures, but they have prayed with affection; their prayers have been attended with tears, which they are ready to think shewed something in the heart.—— But to this it is answered, that these affections have risen from other causes, and not from any true respect to God.

1. They have risen from self-love, and not love to God. If you have wept before God, from the consideration of your own pitiful case; that has been because you loved yourself, and not because you had any respect to God. And if your tears have been from sorrow for your sins; you have mourned for your sins, because you have sinned against yourself, and not because you have sinned against God. *When ye fasted and mourned, did ye at all fast unto me, even unto Me?* Zech. vii. 5.

2. Pride, and a good thought of themselves, very commonly has a great hand in the affections of natural men. They have a good opinion of what they are doing when they are praying; and the reflection on that affects them: they are affected with their own goodness. Men's self-righteousness often occasions tears. A high opinion of themselves before God, and an imagination of their being persons of great account with him, has affected them in their transactions with God. There is commonly abundance of pride in the midst of tears; and often pride is in a great measure the source of them. And then they are so far from being an argument that you are not an enemy to God, that on the contrary, they are an argument, that you are. In your very tears, you are, in a vain conceit of yourself, exalting yourself against God.

3. The affections of natural men often arise from wrong notions they have of God. They conceive of God after the manner they do of men, as though he were a being liable to be wrought upon in his affections. They conceive of him as one whose heart could be drawn, whose affections can be overcome, by what he sees in them. They conceive of him as being taken with them and their performances; and this works on their affections; and thus one tear draws another, and their affections increase by reflection. And oftentimes they conceive of God as one that loves them, and is a friend to them; and such a mistake may work much on their affections. But such affections that arise towards God, as they conceit him to be, is no argument that they have not the same implacable hatred towards God, considered as he really is. There is no concluding that men are not enemies, because they are affected and shed tears in their prayers, and the like. Saul was very much affected when David expostulated with him about pursuing after him, and seeking to kill him. David's words wrought exceedingly upon Saul's affections. *And it*

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came to pass when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? and Saul lift up his voice, and wept. 1 Sam. xxiv. 16. chap. xxvi. 1, &c. He was so affected that he wept aloud, and called David his son, though he was but just before seeking his life. But this affection of Saul was no argument that he did not still continue in his enmity against David. He was David's mortal enemy before, and sought his life; and so he did afterwards. It was but a pang; his enmity was not mortified or done away. The next news we hear of Saul is, that he was pursuing David, and seeking his life again.

SECT. VI.

Restraining Grace a great Privilege.

If natural men are God's enemies; then hence we may learn, how much we are indebted to God for his restraining grace. If all natural men are God's enemies, what would they not do, if they were not restrained? For what has one that is an enemy in his disposition, to restrain him from acting against him to whom he is an enemy? Hatred will not restrain a man from acting any thing against him that is hated. Nothing is too bad for hatred, if it be mere hatred and no love. Hatred shews no kindness either in doing, or forbearing; it will never make a man forbear to act against God; for the very nature of hatred is to seek evil. But wicked men, as has been shewn, are mere enemies to God; they have hatred, without any love at all. And hence natural men have nothing within them, in their own nature, to restrain them from any thing that is bad; and therefore their restraint must not be owing to nature, but to restraining grace. And therefore whatever wickedness we have been kept from, it is not because we have not been bad enough to commit it; but it is God has restrained us, and kept us back from sin. There can be no worse principle, than a principle of hatred to God. And there can be no principle that will go further in wickedness than this, if it be neither mortified nor restrained. But it is not mortified in natural men; and therefore all that keeps them from any degree of wickedness, is restrained. If we have seen others do things that we never did; and if they have done worse than we, this is owing to restraining grace. If we have not done as bad as Pharaoh, it is owing to divine restraints. If we have not done as bad as Judas, or as the scribes and Pharisees, or as bad as Herod, or Simon Magus, it is because God has restrained our corruption. If we have ever heard or read of any that have done worse than we; if we have not gone the

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length in sinning, that the most wicked pirates or carnal persecutors have gone, this is owing to restraining grace. For we are all naturally the enemies of God as much as they. If we have not committed the unpardonable sin, it is owing to restraining grace. There is no worse principle in exercise in that sin, than enmity against God. There is the entire fountain, and all the foundation of the sin against the Holy Ghost, in that enmity against God that naturally reigns in us.

It is not we that restrain ourselves from the commission of the greatest imaginable wickedness; for enmity against God reigns in us and over us; we are under its power and dominion, and are sold under it. We do not restrain that which reigns over us. A slave, as long as he continues a mere slave, cannot controul his master. "He that committeth sin, is the servant of sin." John viii. 34. So that the restraint of this our cruel tyrant, is owing to God, and not to us. What does a poor, impotent subject do to restrain the absolute Lord, that has him wholly under his power? How much will it appear that the world is indebted to the restraining grace of God, if we consider that the world is full of enemies to God. The world is full of inhabitants; and almost all are God's enemies, his implacable and mortal enemies. What therefore would they not do; what work would they not make, if God did not restrain them?

God's work in the restraint that he exercises over a wicked world, is a glorious work. God's holding the reins upon the corruptions of a wicked world, and setting bounds to their wickedness, is a more glorious work, than his ruling the raging of the sea, and setting bounds to its proud waves, and saying, Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further. In hell, God lets the wickedness of wicked spirits have the reins, to rage without restraint; and it would be in a great measure upon earth as it is in hell, did not God restrain the wickedness of the world. But in order to the better understanding how it is owing to the restraining grace of God, that we are kept and withheld from the highest acts of sin, I would here observe several things,

1. Whenever men are withheld from sinning by the common influence of God's Spirit, they are withheld by restraining grace. If sinners are awakened, and are made sensible of the great guilt that sin brings, and that it exposes to a dreadful punishment; under such circumstances they dare not allow themselves in wilful sin; God restrains them by the convictions of his Spirit; and therein their being kept from sin, is owing to restraining grace. And unawakened sinners that live under the gospel, who are in a great measure secure, commonly have some degrees of the influence of God's Spirit, with his ordinances influencing natural conscience. And

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though they be not sufficient thoroughly to rouse them out of security, or make them reform; yet they keep them from going such lengths in sin, as otherwise they might do. And this is restraining grace. They are indeed very stupid and sottish; yet they would be a great deal more so, if God should let them wholly alone.

2. All the restraints that men are under from the word and ordinances, is from grace. The word and ordinances of God might have some degree of influence on men's natural principles of self-love, to restrain them from sin, without any degree of the influence of God's Spirit; but this would be the restraining grace of God; for God's goodness and mercy to a sinful world appears in his giving his word to be a restraint on the wickedness of the world. When men are restrained by fear of those punishments that the word of God threatens; or by the warnings, the offers, and promises of it; when the word of God works upon hope, or fear, or natural conscience, to restrain men from sin, this is the restraining grace of God, and is owing to his mercy. It is an instance of God's mercy that he has revealed hell, to restrain men's wickedness; and that he has revealed a way of salvation, and a possibility of eternal life. This, which has great influence on men to keep them from sin, is the restraining grace of God.

3. When men are restrained from sin, by the light of nature, this also is of grace. If men are destitute of the light of God's word, yet the light of natural conscience teaches that sin brings guilt, and exposes to punishment. The light of nature teaches that there is a God who governs the world, and will reward the good and punish the evil. God is the author of the light of nature, as well as the light of revelation. He in mercy to mankind makes known many things by natural light to work upon men's fear and self-love, in order to restrain their corruptions.

4. When God restrains men's corruptions by his providence, this is from grace. And that whether it be his general providence in ordering the state of mankind; or his providential disposals towards them in particular.

(1.) God greatly restrains the corruption of the world, by ordering the state of mankind. He hath set them here in a *mortal* state, and in a state of *probation* for eternity; and that is a great restraint to corruption. God hath so ordered the state of mankind, that ordinarily many kinds of sin and wickedness are *disgraceful*, and what tend to the hurt of a man's character and reputation amongst his fellow-men; and that is a great restraint. He hath so disposed the world, that many kinds of wickedness are many ways very contrary to men's temporal *interest*; and mankind are led to prohibit many kinds of wickedness by human laws; and that is a great

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restraint. God hath set up a church in the world, made up of those who, if they are answerable to their profession, have the fear and love of God in their hearts; and they, by holding forth revealed light, by keeping up the ordinances of God, and by warning others, are a great restraint to the wickedness of the world.

In all these things, the restraining grace of God appears. It is God's mercy to mankind, that he has so ordered their state, that they should have so many things, by fear and a regard to their own interest, to restrain their corruptions. It is God's mercy to the world, that the state of mankind here differs from the state of the damned in hell; where men will have none of these things to restrain them. The wisdom of God, as well as the attributes of his grace, greatly appear in thus disposing things for the restraining of the wickedness of men.

(2.) God greatly restrains the corruptions of men by his providence towards particular persons; by placing men in such circumstances as to lay them under restraints. And to this it is often owing that some natural men never go such lengths in sinning, or are never guilty of such atrocious wickedness as some others, that Providence has placed them in different circumstances. If it were not for this, many thousands of natural men, who now live sober and orderly lives, would do as Pharaoh did. The reason why they do not, is, that Providence has placed them in different circumstances. If they were in the same circumstances as Pharaoh was in, they would do as he did. And so, if in the same circumstances as Manasseh, as Judas, or Nero. But Providence restrains their corruptions, by putting them in such circumstances, as not to open such a door or outlet for their corruption, as he did to them. So some do not perpetrate such horrid things, they do not live such horribly vicious lives as some others, because Providence has restrained them, by ordering that they should have a better education than others. Providence has ordered that they should be the children of pious parents, it may be, or should live where they should enjoy many means of grace; and so Providence has laid them under restraints. Now this is restraining grace; or the attribute of God's grace exercised in thus restraining persons.

And oftentimes God restrains men's corruptions by particular events of providence. By particular afflictions they are brought under, or by particular occurrences, whereby God does, as it were, block up men's way in their course of sin, or in some wickedness that they had devised, and that otherwise they would perpetrate. Or something happens unexpected to hold men back from that which they were about to commit. Thus God restrained David by his providence from shedding

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blood, as he intended to do. "Now, therefore, my Lord, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing *the Lord hath withholden* thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand——" (1 Sam. xxv. 26.) God withheld him from it no otherwise, than by ordering it so in his providence that Abigail should come, and by her wisdom should cool, pacify, and persuade him to alter his purpose. See ver. 32, 33, 34.

5. Godly persons are greatly indebted to restraining grace, in keeping them from dreadful acts of sin. So it was in that instance of David, just mentioned. Even godly persons, when God has left, and has not restrained them, have fallen into dreadful acts of sin. So did David, in the case of Uriah, and Lot, and Peter. And when other godly persons are kept from falling into such sins, or much worse sins than these, it is owing to the restraining grace of God. Merely having a principle of grace in their hearts, or merely their being godly persons, without God's presence to restrain them, will not keep them from great acts of sin. That the godly do not fall into the most horrid sins that can be conceived of, is owing not so much to any inconsistence between their falling into such sins, and the having a principle of grace in the heart, as it is owing to the covenant mercy of God, whereby he has promised never to leave nor forsake his people, and that he will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able; but with the temptation will make a way for them to escape. If saving grace restrains men from great acts of sin, this is owing to God who gives such exercises of grace at that time when the temptation comes, that they are restrained.

Let not the godly therefore be insensible of their obligations to the restraining grace of God. Though they cannot be said to be enemies to God, because a principle of enmity does not reign; yet they have the very same principle and seed of enmity in them, though it be mortified. Though it be not in reigning power, yet it has great strength; and is too strong for them, without God's almighty power to help them against it. Though they be not enemies to God, because they have a principle of love; yet their old man, the body of sin and death that yet remains in them, is a mortal enemy to God. Corruption in the godly, is not better than it is in the wicked; but is of as bad a nature every whit, as that which is in a mortal enemy to God. And though it be not in reigning power; yet it would dreadfully rage, were it not for God's restraining grace.

God gives his restraining grace to both natural and godly men; but there is this difference; he gives his restraining grace to his children in the way of covenant mercy: it is part of the mercy promised in his covenant. God is faithful, and

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will not leave them to sin in like manner as wicked men do; otherwise they would do every whit as bad.—Let not therefore the godly attribute it to themselves, or merely to their own goodness, that they are not guilty of such horrid crimes as they hear of in others: let them consider it is not owing to them, but to God's restraints.—Thus all, both godly and ungodly, may learn from this doctrine, their great obligations to the restraining grace of God.

SECT. VII.

Why natural Men are not willing to come to Christ, and their dreadful Condition.

HENCE we may learn the reason why natural men will not come to Christ: they *do* not come because they *will* not come. *Ye* WILL *not come to me, that ye might have life,* John v. 40. When we say that natural men are not willing to come to Christ, it is not meant that they are not willing to be delivered from hell; for without doubt, no natural man is willing to go to hell. Nor is it meant, that they are not willing that Christ should keep them from going to hell. Without doubt natural men under awakenings often greatly desire this. But this does not argue that they are willing to come to Christ: for, notwithstanding their desire to be delivered from hell, their hearts do not close with Christ, but are averse to him. They see nothing in Christ wherefore they should desire him; no beauty nor comeliness to draw their hearts to him. And they are not willing to take Christ as he is; they would fain divide him. There are some things in him that they like, and others that they greatly dislike; but consider him as he is, and as he is offered to them in the gospel, and they are not willing to accept of Christ; for in doing so, they must of necessity part with all their sins; they must sell the world, and part with their own righteousness. But they had rather, for the present, run the venture of going to hell, than do that.

When men are *truly* willing to come to Christ, they are *freely* willing. It is not what they are forced and driven to by threatenings; but they are willing to come, and choose to come without being driven. But natural men have no such free willingness; but on the contrary have an aversion. And the ground of it is that which we have heard, *viz.* That they are enemies to God. Their having such a reigning enmity against God, makes them obstinately refuse to come to Christ. If a man is an enemy to God, he will necessarily be an enemy to Christ too; for Christ is the Son of God; he is infinitely near to God, yea has the nature of God, as well as the nature of

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man. He is a saviour appointed of God; he anointed him, and sent him into the world. And in performing the work of redemption, he wrought the works of God; always did those things that pleased him; and all that he does as a saviour, is to his glory. And one great thing he aimed at in redemption, was to deliver them from their idols, and bring them to God. The case being so, and sinners being enemies to God, they will necessarily be opposite to coming to Christ; for Christ is of God, and as a saviour seeks them to bring them to God only; but natural men are not of God, but are averse to him.

Hence we see, how dreadful is the condition of natural men. Their state is a state of enmity with God. If we consider what God is, and what men are, it will be easy for us to conclude that such men as are God's enemies, must be miserable. Consider, ye that are enemies to God, how great he is. He is the eternal God who fills heaven and earth, and whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain. He is the God that made you; in whose hand your breath is, and whose are all your ways; the God in whom you live, and move, and have your being; who has your soul and body in his hands every moment.

You would look on yourself as in very unhappy circumstances, if your neighbours were all your enemies, and none of your fellow-creatures were your friends. If every body were set against you, and all despised and hated you, you would be ready to think, you had better be out of the world than in it. But if it be such a calamity to have enmity maintained between you and your fellow-creatures, what is it, when you and the almighty God are enemies? What avails either the friendship or enmity of your neighbours, poor worms of the dust, in comparison of the friendship or enmity of the great God of heaven and earth?—Consider,

1. If you continue in your enmity a little longer, there will be a mutual enmity between God and you to all eternity. God will appear to be your dreadful and irreconcileable enemy. If you should die an enemy to God, there will be no such thing as any reconciliation after death. God will then appear to you in hatred, without any love, any pity, and any mercy at all. As you hate God, he will hate you. And that will be verified of you,—*My soul loathed them, and their soul abhorred me*, Zech. xi. 8. And then God will be your enemy for ever. If you be not reconciled so as to become his friend in this life, God never will become your friend after death. If you continue an enemy to God till death, God will continue an enemy to you to all eternity. You will have no mediator offered you: there will be no day's man betwixt you. So that it becomes you to consider what it will be to have God your enemy to all eternity, without any possibility of being reconciled.

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Consider, what will it be to have this enmity to be mutual, and maintained for ever on both sides. For as God will for ever continue an enemy to you, so you will for ever continue an enemy to God. If you continue God's enemy until death, you will always be his enemy. And after death your enmity will have no restraint, but it will break out and rage without controul. When you come to be a firebrand of hell, you will be so in two respects, *viz.* As you will be full of the fire of God's wrath; and as you will be all on a blaze with spite and malice towards God. You will be as full of the fire of malice, as you will with the fire of divine vengeance, and both will make you full of torment. Then you will appear as you are, a viper indeed. You are now under great disguise; a wolf in sheep's clothing: but then your mask will be pulled off; you shall loose your garments, and walk naked, Rev. xvi. 15. Then will you vent your rage and malice in fearful blasphemies. That same tongue, to cool which you will wish for a drop of water, will be eternally employed in cursing and blaspheming God and Christ. And that not from any new corruption being put into your heart; but only from God's withdrawing his hand from restraining your old corruption. And what a miserable way will this be of spending your eternity.

2. Consider, what will be the consequence of a mutual enmity between God and you, if it be continued. Though hitherto you have met with no very great changes, yet they will come. After a little while, dying time will come; and then what will be the consequence of this enmity? God, whose enemy you are, has the frame of your body in his hands. Your times are in his hand; and he it is that appoints your bounds. And when he sends death to arrest you, to change your countenance, to dissolve your frame, and to take you away from all your earthly friends, and from all that is dear and pleasant to you in the world; what will be the issue? Will not you then stand in need of God's help? Would not he be the best friend in such a case, worth more than ten thousand earthly friends? If God be your enemy, then to whom will you betake yourself for a friend? When you launch forth into the boundless gulph of eternity, then you will need some friend to take care of you; but if God be your enemy, where will you betake yourself? Your soul must go naked into another world, in eternal separation from all worldly things: and your soul will not be in its own power to defend, or dispose of itself. Will you not then need to have God for a friend, into whose hands you may commend your spirit? But how dreadful will it be, to have God your enemy!

The time is coming when the frame of this world shall be dissolved. Christ shall descend in the clouds of heaven, in the glory of his Father; and you, with all the rest of mankind,

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must stand before his judgment-seat. Then what will be the consequence of this mutual enmity between God and you! If God be your enemy, who will stand your friend? Now, it may be, it does not appear to be very terrible to you to have God for your enemy; but when such changes as these are brought to pass, it will greatly alter the appearance of things. Then God's favour will appear to you of infinite worth. They, and they only, will then appear happy, who have the love of God: and then you will know that God's enemies are miserable.—But under this head, consider more particularly several things.

(1.) What God can do to his enemies. Or rather, what can he not do? How miserable can he who is almighty make his enemies? Consider, you that are enemies to God, whether or no you shall be able to make your part good with him. *Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?* 1 Cor. x. 22. Have you such a conceit of your own strength, as that you think to try it out with God? Do you intend to run the risk of an encounter with him? Do you imagine that your hands can be strong, or your heart can endure? Do you think you shall be well able to defend yourself, or to escape out of his hand? Do you think that you shall be able to uphold your spirits, when God acts as an enemy towards you? If so, then gird up your loins, and see what the event will be. Therefore thus will I do unto thee—*and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God.*—Amos iv. 12. Is it not in vain to set the briars and thorns in battle array against devouring flames; which though they seem to be armed with natural weapons, yet the fire will pass through them, and burn them together? See Isa. xxvii. 4.

And if you endeavour to support yourself under God's wrath, cannot God lay you under such misery, as to cause your spirit quite to fail; so that you shall find no strength to resist him, or to uphold yourself? Why should a worm think of supporting himself against an omnipotent adversary? Consider, God has made your soul: and he can fill it with misery; he made your body, and can bring what torments he will upon it. God who made you, has given you a capacity to bear torment; and he has that capacity in his hands. How dreadful must it be to fall into the hands of such an enemy! Surely, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* Heb. x. 31.

(2.) If God be your enemy, you may rationally conclude that he will act as such in his dealings with you. We have already observed that you have enmity without any love or true respect. So if you continue to be so, God will appear to be your mere enemy; and will be so for ever, without being reconciled. But if it be so, he will doubtless act as such. If he eternally hates you, he will act in his dealings with you, as one that hates you without any love or pity. The proper

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tendency and aim of hatred, is the misery of the object hated; so that you may expect God will make you miserable, and that you will not be spared.—Now, God does not act as your mere enemy: if he corrects you, it is in measure. He now exercises abundance of mercy to you. He threatens you now: but it is in a way of warning, and so in a merciful way. He now calls, invites, and strives with you, and waits to be gracious to you. But hereafter there will be an end to all these things: in another world God will cease to shew you mercy.

(3.) If you will continue God's enemy, you may rationally conclude that God will deal with you so as to make it appear how dreadful it is to have God for an enemy. It is very dreadful to have a mighty prince for an enemy. *The wrath of a king, is as the roaring of a lion*, Prov. xix. 12. But if the wrath of a man, a fellow-worm, be so terrible, what is the wrath of God! And God will doubtless shew it to be immensely more dreadful. If you will be an enemy, God will act so as to glorify those attributes which he exercises as an enemy; which are, his majesty, his power, and justice. His great majesty, his awful justice, and mighty power, shall be shewed upon you. *What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.* Rom. ix. 22.

(4.) Consider, What God has said he will do to his enemies. He has declared that they shall not escape; but that he will surely punish them. *Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies, thy right hand shall find out all those that hate thee.* Psalm xxi. 8. *And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face.* Deut. vii. 10. *The Lord shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his tresvasses.* Psalm lxviii. 21.

Yea, God hath sworn that he will be avenged on them; and that in a most awful and dreadful manner. *For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and I will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, (and my sword shall devour flesh,) and that with the blood of the slain—from the beginning of revenges on the enemy.* Deut. xxxii. 40, 41, 42. The terribleness of the threatened destruction is here variously set forth. God "whets his glittering sword," as one that prepares himself to do some great execution. "His hands take hold on judgment," to signify that he will surely reward them as they deserve. "He will render vengeance to his enemies, and reward them that hate him." *i. e.* He will render their full reward. "I will make mine arrows drunk with blood." This signifies the greatness of the destruction.

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It shall not be a little of their blood that shall satisfy; but his arrows shall be glutted with their blood. "And his sword shall devour flesh." That is, it shall make dreadful waste of it. This is the terrible manner in which God will one day rise up and execute vengeance on his enemies!

Again, the completeness of their destruction is represented in the following words: *The wicked shall perish; the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs, they shall consume: into smoke shall they consume away.* Psalm xxxvii. 20. The fat of lambs, when it is burnt in the fire, burns all up; there is not so much as a cinder left; it all consumes into smoke. This represents the perfect destruction of God's enemies in his wrath. So God hath promised Christ; that he would make his enemies his footstool, Psalm cx. 1. *i. e.* He would pour the greatest contempt upon them, and as it were tread them under foot. Consider, that all these things will be executed on you, if you continue God's enemies.

SECT. VIII.

God may justly withhold Mercy.

If natural men are God's enemies, hence we may learn, how justly God may refuse to shew you mercy. For is God obliged to shew mercy to his enemies? Is God bound to set his love on them that have no love to him; but hate him with perfect hatred? Is he bound to come and dwell with them that have an aversion to him, and choose to keep at a distance from him, and fly from him as one that is hateful to them? Even should you desire the salvation of your soul, is God bound to comply with your desires, when you always resist and oppose his will? Is God bound to put honour upon you, and to advance you to such dignity as to be a child of the King of kings, and the heir of glory, while at the same time you set him too low to have even the lowest place in your heart?

This doctrine affords a strong argument for the absolute sovereignty of God, with respect to the salvation of sinners. If God is pleased to shew mercy to his haters, it is certainly fit that he should do it in a sovereign way, without acting as any way obliged. God will shew mercy to his mortal enemies; but then he will not be bound, he will have his liberty to choose the objects of his mercy; to shew mercy to what enemy he pleases, and to punish and destroy which of his haters he pleases. And certainly this is a fit and reasonable thing. It is fit that God should distribute saving blessings in this way, and in no other, *viz.* in a sovereign and arbitrary way. And

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that ever any body thought of or devised any other way for God to shew mercy, than to have mercy on whom he would have mercy, must arise from ignorance of their own hearts, whereby they were insensible what enemies they naturally are to God. But consider here the following things:

1. How *causelessly* you are enemies to God. You have no manner of reason for it, either from what God is, or from what he has done. You have no reason for this *from what he is*. For he is an infinitely lovely and glorious Being; the fountain of all excellency, all that is amiable and lovely in the universe, is originally and eminently in him. Nothing can possibly be conceived of that could be lovely in God, that is not in him, and that in the greatest possible degree.

And you have no reason for this, *from what God has done*. For he has been a good and bountiful God to you. He has exercised abundance of kindness to you; has carried you from the womb, preserved your life, taken care of you, and provided for you, all your life long. He has exercised great patience and long-suffering towards you. If it had not been for the kindness of God to you, what would have become of you? What would have become of your body? And what, before this time, would have become of your soul? And you are now, every day, and hour, maintained by the goodness and bounty of God. Every new breath you draw, is a new gift of his to you. How causelessly then are you such dreadful enemies to God! And how justly might he for it eternally deprive you of all mercy, seeing you do thus requite God for his mercy and kindness to you!

2. Consider, how *you would resent* it, if others were such enemies to you, as you are to God. If they had their hearts so full of enmity to you; if they treated you with such contempt, and opposed you, as you do God; how would you resent it? Do you not find that you are apt greatly to resent it, when any oppose you, and shew an ill spirit towards you? And though you excuse your own enmity against God from your corrupt nature that you brought into the world with you, which you could not help; yet you do not excuse others for being enemies to you from their corrupt nature that they brought into the world, which they could not help; but are ready bitterly to resent it notwithstanding.

Consider therefore, if you, a poor, unworthy, unlovely creature, do so resent it, when you are hated, how may God justly resent it when you are enemies to him, an infinitely glorious Being; and a Being from whom you have received so much kindness!

3. How *unreasonable* is it for you to imagine that you can oblige God to have respect to you by any thing that you can do, continuing still to be his enemy. If you think you have

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prayed, and read, and done something considerable for God; yet who cares for the seeming kindness of an enemy? What value would you yourself set upon a man making a shew of friendship, when you knew at the same time, that he was inwardly your mortal enemy? Would you look upon yourself obliged for such respect and kindness? Would you not rather abhor it? Would you count such respect to be valued, as Joab's towards Amasa, who took him by the beard, and kissed him, and said, Art thou in health, my brother?—and smote him at the same time under the fifth rib, and killed him! What if you do pray to God? Is he obliged to hear the prayers of an enemy? What if you have taken a great deal of pains, is God obliged to give heaven for the prayers of an enemy? He may justly abhor your prayers, and all that you do in religion, as the flattery of a mortal enemy.

SECT. IX.

Practical Improvement.

HENCE we may learn,

1. How wonderful is the love that is manifested in giving Christ to die for us. For this is love to enemies. "While we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." How wonderful was the love of God the Father, in giving such a gift to those who not only could not be profitable to him, but were his enemies, and to so great a degree! They had great enmity against him; yet so did he love them, that he gave his own Son to lay down his life, in order to save their lives. Though they had enmity that sought to pull God down from his throne; yet he so loved them, that he sent down Christ from heaven, from his throne there, to be in form of a servant; and instead of a throne of glory, gave him to be nailed to the cross, and to be laid in the grave, that so we might be brought to a throne of glory.

How wonderful was the love of Christ, in thus exercising dying love towards his enemies! He loved those that hated him, with hatred that sought to take away his life, so as voluntarily to lay down his life, that they might have life through him. *Herein is love; not that we loved him, but that he loved us, and laid down his life for us.*

2. If we are all naturally God's enemies, hence we may learn what a spirit it becomes us as Christians to possess towards our enemies. Though we are enemies to God, yet we hope that God has loved us, that Christ has died for us, that God has forgiven or will forgive us; and will do us good, and bestow infinite mercies and blessings upon us, so as to

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make us happy for ever. All this mercy, we hope has been, or will be exercised towards us.

Certainly then, it will not become us to be bitter in our spirits against those that are enemies to us, and have injured and ill treated us; and though they have yet an ill spirit towards us. Seeing we depend so much on God's forgiving us, though enemies, we should exercise a spirit of forgiveness towards our enemies. And therefore our Saviour inserted it in that prayer, which he dictated as a general directory to all; "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," to enforce the duty upon us, and to shew us how reasonable it is. And we ought to love them even while enemies; for so we hope God hath done to us. We should be the children of our Father, who is kind to the unthankful and evil. Luke vi. 35.

If we refuse thus to do, and are of another spirit, we may justly expect that God will deny us his mercy, as he has threatened! *If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* Matt. vi. 14, 15. The same we have in the parable of the man, who owed his lord ten thousand talents, Matt. xviii. 23—35.

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THE

WISDOM OF GOD,

DISPLAYED

IN THE

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WISDOM

DISPLAYED IN SALVATION.

EPHESIANS iii. 10,

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.

Introduction.

THE apostle is speaking in the context of the glorious doctrine of the redemption of sinners by Jesus Christ; and how it was in a great measure kept hid in the past ages of the world. It was a mystery, that before they did not understand, but now it was in a glorious manner brought to light. (ver. 3—5.) "By revelation he made known unto me the mystery, (as I wrote afore in few words; whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets, by the Spirit." And ver. 8, 9. "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which, from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."

And the apostle in the text informs us, that what Christ had accomplished towards his church, in the work of redemption, had not only in a great measure unvailed the mystery to the church in this world; but God had more clearly and fully opened it to the understanding even of the angels themselves; and that this was one end of God in it, to discover the glory of

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his wisdom to the angels. *To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.*

One end of revealing God's counsels concerning the work of redemption, is making known God's *wisdom*. It is called *manifold* wisdom; because of the manifold glorious ends that are attained by it. The excellent designs, hereby accomplished, are very manifold. The wisdom of God in this is of vast extent. The contrivance is so manifold, that one may spend an eternity in discovering more of the excellent ends and designs accomplished by it; and the multitude and vast variety of things that are, by divine contrivance, brought to conspire to the bringing about those ends.

We may observe, *to whom* it is that God would manifest this his wisdom, by revealing the mystery of our redemption; —and they are not only men, but the *angels*. "To the intent that now unto the *principalities* and *powers in heavenly places* might be known—the manifold wisdom of God." The angels are often called principalities and powers, because of the exalted dignity of their nature. The angels excel in strength and wisdom. Those who are the *wise men* of the earth are called *princes* in the style of the apostle, 1 Cor. ii. 6. *Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world.* Ver. 8. *Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.* So the angels are called principalities for their great wisdom. They may also be so called for the honour God has put upon them, in employing them as his ministers and instruments, wherewith he governs the world: and therefore are called thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, Col. i. 16.

They are called principalities and powers in *heavenly* places, as distinguishing them from those that are in places of *earthly* power and dignity. The offices, or places of dignity and power that the angels sustain, are not earthly but *heavenly*. They are in places of honour and power in the *heavenly city* and the *heavenly kingdom*.

One end of God in revealing his design or contrivance for redemption, as he hath so fully and gloriously done by Jesus Christ, is that the angels in heaven may behold the glory of his wisdom by it. Though they are such bright intelligences, and do always behold the face of God the father, and know so much; yet here is matter of instruction for them. Here they may see more of the divine wisdom than ever they had seen before. It was a new discovery of the wisdom of God to them.

The *time* when this display of the wisdom of God was especially made to the angels is, when Christ introduced the

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gospel dispensation, implied in those words, "To the intent that *now* unto the principalities," &c. When Christ came into the world and died, and actually performed the work of redemption—when he had fully and plainly revealed the counsels of God concerning it; and accordingly introduced the evangelical dispensation, and erected the gospel church,—then the angels understood more of the mystery of man's redemption, and the manifold designs and counsels of divine wisdom, than ever they had done before.

In the foregoing verse the apostle, after speaking of revealing this wisdom of God to man, "And to make all *men* see, what is the fellowship of this mystery," &c. speaks of this mystery as a thing from the beginning kept hid till now. "The mystery, which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God——that now," &c. In this verse he mentions another end, *viz.* that he may at the same time make the *angels* also see God's wisdom in his glorious scheme of redemption.——"Now at this time," implies that it was before a mystery kept hid from them in comparison of what it is now. And here is room enough for the angels to discover more and more to all eternity of the wisdom of God in this work.

Observe the *medium* by which the angels come by this knowledge, *viz.* the church.—"That now unto principalities—might be known *by the church*,"—*i. e.* by the things they see done *in* the church, or *towards* the church: and by what they see *concerning* the church. So hath it pleased the sovereign God, that the angels should have the most glorious discoveries of divine wisdom by his doings towards his church, a sort of beings much inferior to themselves. It hath pleased God to put this honour upon us.

The wisdom appearing in the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, is far above the wisdom of the angels. For here it is mentioned as one end of God in revealing the contrivance of our salvation, that the angels thereby might see and know how great and manifold the wisdom of God is; to hold forth the divine wisdom to the angels' view and admiration. But why is it so, if this wisdom be not higher than their own wisdom? It never would have been mentioned as one end of revealing the contrivance of redemption, that the angels might see how manifold God's wisdom is; if all the wisdom to be seen in it was no greater than their own. It is mentioned as a wisdom such as they had never seen before, not in God, much less in themselves. That *now* might be known how manifold the wisdom of God is; now, four thousand years since the creation.—In all that time the angels had always beheld the face of God; and had been studying God's works of creation; yet they never till that day, had seen any thing like that: never knew how *manifold* God's wisdom is, as now they knew it by the church.

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SECT. I.

Wonderful Things done, by which Salvation is procured.

SUCH is the choice of the person chosen to be our Redeemer, —the substituting of him in our room;—his incarnation—his life—his death—and exaltation. And,

1. We will consider the *choice of the person* to be our Redeemer. When God designed the redemption of mankind, his great wisdom appears in that he pitched upon his own his only begotten Son, to be the person to perform the work. He was a Redeemer of God's own choosing, and therefore he is called in Scripture, God's *elect*, (Isa. lxii. 1.) The wisdom of choosing this person to be the Redeemer, appears in his being every way a *fit* person for this undertaking. It was necessary that the person that is the Redeemer, should be a *divine* person. —None but a *divine* person was sufficient for this great work. The work is infinitely unequal to any creature. It was requisite, that the Redeemer of sinners, should be himself infinitely *holy*. None could take away the infinite evil of sin, but one that was infinitely far from and contrary to sin himself. Christ is a fit person upon this account.

It was requisite, that the person, in order to be sufficient for this undertaking, should be one of infinite *dignity* and worthiness, that he might be capable of meriting infinite blessings. The Son of God is a fit person on this account. It was necessary, that he should be a person of infinite *power* and *wisdom*; for this work is so difficult, that it requires such an one. Christ is a fit person also upon this account. It was requisite, that he should be a person infinitely *dear* to God the father, in order to give an infinite value to his transactions in the father's esteem, and that the father's love to him might balance the offence and provocation by our sins. Christ is a fit person upon this account. Therefore called *the beloved*, (Eph. i. 6.) He hath made us accepted in the *beloved*.

It was requisite, that the person should be one that could act in this as of *his own absolute right:* one that, in himself, is not a servant or subject; because, if he is one that cannot act of his own right, he cannot merit any thing. He that is a servant, and that can do no more than he is bound to do, cannot merit. And then he that has nothing that is absolutely his own, cannot pay any price to redeem another. Upon this account Christ is a fit person; and none but a divine person can be fit.—And he must be a person also of infinite *mercy* and *love*; for no other person but such an one would undertake a work so difficult, for a creature so unworthy as man. Upon

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this account also Christ is a fit person.—It was requisite that he should be a person of unchangeable perfect *truth* and faithfulness; otherwise he would not be fit to be depended on by us in so great an affair. Christ is also a fit person upon this account.

The wisdom of God in choosing his eternal Son, appears, not only in that he is a fit person; but in that he was the *only* fit person of all persons, whether created or uncreated. No *created* person, neither man, nor angel, was fit for this undertaking; for we have just now shewn, that he must be a person of *infinite* holiness—dignity—power—wisdom; infinitely dear to God—of infinite love and mercy; and one that may act of his own absolute right. But no creature, how excellent soever, has any one of these qualifications.—There are three *uncreated* persons, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; and Christ alone of these was a suitable person for a Redeemer. It was not meet, that the Redeemer should be God the *Father*; because he, in the divine economy of the persons of the Trinity, was the person that holds the rights of the Godhead, and so was the person offended, whose justice required satisfaction; and was to be appeased by a mediator. It was not meet it should be the *Holy Ghost*, for in being mediator between the Father and the saints, he is in some sense so between the Father and the Spirit. The saints, in all their spiritual transactions with God, act by the Spirit: or rather, it is the Spirit of God, that acts in them. They are the temples of the Holy Ghost. The holy Spirit dwelling in them, is their principle of action, in all their transactings with God. But in these their spiritual transactings with God, they act by a *mediator*. These spiritual and holy exercises cannot be acceptable, or avail any thing with God, as from a fallen creature, but by a mediator. Therefore Christ, in being mediator between the Father and the saints, may be said to be mediator between the Father and the holy Spirit, that acts in the saints. And therefore it was meet, that the mediator should not be either the Father or the Spirit, but a middle person between them both. It is the Spirit in the saints, that seeks the blessing of God, by faith and prayer; and, as the apostle says, with groanings that cannot be uttered, (Rom. viii. 26.) *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered.* The Spirit in the saints seeks divine blessings of God, by and through a mediator; and therefore that mediator must not be the Spirit, but another person.

It shews a divine wisdom, to *know* that he was a fit person. No other but one of *divine* wisdom could have known it. None but one of infinite wisdom could have thought of him to be a

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Redeemer of sinners. For he, as he is God, is one of the persons offended by sin; against whom man by his sin had rebelled. Who but God infinitely wise could ever have thought of *him* to be a Redeemer of sinners! Against whom they had sinned, to whom they were enemies, and of whom they deserved infinitely ill! Who would ever have thought of him as one that should set his heart upon man, and exercise infinite love and pity to him, and exhibit infinite wisdom, power, and merit in redeeming him! We proceed,

2. To consider the *substituting* of this person in our room. After choosing the person to be our Redeemer, the next step of divine wisdom is, to contrive the way how he should perform this work. If God had declared who the person was, that should do this work, and had gone no further; no creature could have thought which way this person could have performed the work. If God had told them, that his own Son must be the Redeemer; and that he alone was a fit person for the work: and that he was a person every way fit and sufficient for it,—but had proposed to *them* to contrive a way how this fit and sufficient person should proceed, we may well suppose that all created understandings would have been utterly at a loss.

The first thing necessary to be done, is, that this Son of God should become our representative and surety; and so be substituted in the sinner's room. But who of created intelligences would have thought of any such thing as the eternal and infinitely beloved Son of God being substituted in the room of sinners! His standing in stead of a sinner, a rebel, an object of the wrath of God! Who would have thought of a person of infinite glory representing sinful worms, that had made themselves by sin infinitely provoking and abominable!

For, if the Son of God be substituted in the sinner's room, then his sin must be charged upon him: he will thereby take the guilt of the sinner upon himself; he must be subject to the same law that man was, both as to the commands, and threatenings: but who would have thought of any such thing concerning the Son of God! But we proceed,

3. To consider the *incarnation* of Jesus Christ. The next step of divine wisdom in contriving how Christ should perform the work of redeeming sinners, was in determining his incarnation. Suppose God had revealed his counsels thus far to created understandings, that his own Son was the person chosen for this work, that he had substituted him in the sinner's room, and appointed him to take the sinner's obligations and guilt on himself—and had revealed no more, but had left the rest to them to find out; it is no way probable, that even then they could ever have thought of a way, whereby this person might actually have performed the work of redemption. For if the

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Son of God be substituted in the sinner's stead, then he takes the sinner's obligations on himself. For instance, he must take the obligation the sinner is under to perform *perfect obedience* to the divine law. But it is not probable, that any creature could have conceived how that could be possible.—How should a person who is the eternal JEHOVAH, become a servant, be under law, and perform obedience even to the law of man!

And again, if the Son of God be substituted in the sinner's stead, then he comes under the sinner's obligation to suffer the punishment, which man's sin had deserved. And who could have thought that to be possible! For how should a divine person, who is essentially, unchangeably, and infinitely happy, suffer pain and torment? And how should he who is the object of God's infinitely dear love, suffer the wrath of his Father. It is not to be supposed, that created wisdom ever would have found out a way how to have got over these difficulties. But divine wisdom hath found out a way, *viz.* by the incarnation of the Son of God. That the Word should be made flesh, that he might be both God and man, in one person: what created understanding could have conceived that such a thing was possible? Yet these things could never be *proved* to be *impossible*. This distinction, duly considered, will shew the futility of many Socinian objections.

And if God had revealed to them, that it was possible, and even that it should be, but left them to find out *how* it should be; we may well suppose that they would all have been puzzled and confounded, to conceive of a way for so uniting a man to the eternal Son of God, that they should be but one person; that one who is truly a man in all respects, should indeed be the very same Son of God, that was with God from all eternity. This is a great mystery to us. Hereby a person that is infinite, omnipotent and unchangeable, is become in a sense, a finite, a feeble man: a man subject to our sinless infirmities, passions, and calamities! The great God, the sovereign of heaven and earth, is thus become a worm of the dust. (Psal. xxii. 6.) "I am a worm, and no man." He that is eternal and self-existent, is by this union born of a woman! He who is the great original Spirit, is clothed with flesh and blood like one of us! He who is independent, self-sufficient, and all-sufficient, now is come to stand in need of food and clothing: he becomes poor, "has not where to lay his head;"—stands in need of the charity of men; and is maintained by it! It is far above us, to conceive *how* it is done. It is a great wonder and mystery to us: but it was no mystery to divine wisdom.

4. The next thing to be considered is, the *life* of Christ in this world. The wisdom of God appears in the circumstances of his life—and in the work and business of his life.

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(1.) The *circumstances* of his life. If God had revealed that his own Son should be incarnate, and should live in this world in the human nature; and it had been left to men to determine what circumstances of life would have been most suitable for him, human wisdom would have determined, that he should appear in the world in a most magnificent manner; with very extraordinary outward ensigns of honour, authority, and power, far above any of the kings of the earth: that here he should reign in great visible pomp and splendor over all nations.—And thus it was that men's wisdom *did* determine, before Christ came. The wise, the great men among the Jews, Scribes and Pharisees, who were called "Princes of this world," *did* expect that the Messiah would thus appear. But the wisdom of God chose quite otherwise: it chose that when the Son of God became man, he should begin his life in a stable; for many years dwell obscurely in a family of low degree in the world; and be in low outward circumstances: that he should be poor, and not have where to lay his head: that he should be maintained by the charity of some of his disciples: that he should "Grow up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground," (Isa. liii. 2.) "That he should not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets," (Isa. xlii. 2.) That he should come to Zion in a lowly manner, "Riding on an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass."—"That he should be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

And now the divine determination in this matter is made known, we may safely conclude that it is far the most suitable: and that it would not have been at all suitable for God, when he was manifest in the flesh, to appear with earthly pomp, wealth and grandeur. No! these things are infinitely too mean, and despicable, for the Son of God to shew as if he affected or esteemed them. Men, if they had had this way proposed to them, would have been ready to condemn it, as foolish and very unsuitable for the Son of God. "But the foolishness of God is wiser than men," (1 Cor. i. 25.) "And God hath brought to nought the wisdom of this world, and the princes of this world," (1 Cor. ii. 6.) Christ, by thus appearing in mean and low outward circumstances in the world, has poured contempt upon all worldly wealth and glory; and has taught us to despise it. And if it becomes mean men to despise them, how much more did it become the Son of God! And then Christ hereby hath taught us to be lowly in heart. If he who was infinitely high and great, was thus lowly; how lowly should we be, who are indeed so vile.

(2.) The wisdom of God appears in the *work* and business of the life of Christ. Particularly, that he should perfectly obey the law of God, under such great temptations: that he should have conflicts with, and overcome for us, in a way of

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obedience, the powers of earth and hell: that he should be subject to, not only the *moral* law, but the *ceremonial* also, that heavy yoke of bondage. Christ went through the time of his public ministry, in delivering to us divine instructions and doctrines. The wisdom of God appears in giving us such an one to be our prophet and teacher, who is a divine person: who is himself the very wisdom and word of God; and was from all eternity in the bosom of the Father. His word is of greater authority and weight than if delivered by the mouth of an ordinary prophet. And how wisely ordered, that the same should be our teacher and Redeemer; in order that his relations and offices, as Redeemer, might the more sweeten and endear his instructions to us. We are ready to give heed to what is said by those who are dear to us. Our love to their persons makes us to delight in their discourse. It is therefore wisely ordered, that he who has done so much to endear himself to us, should be appointed our great prophet, to deliver to us divine doctrines.

5. The next thing to be considered is the death of Christ. This is a means of salvation for poor sinners, that no other but divine wisdom would have pitched upon; and when revealed, it was doubtless greatly to the surprise of all the hosts of heaven, and they never will cease to wonder at it. How astonishing is it, that a person who is blessed for ever, and is infinitely and essentially happy, should endure the greatest sufferings that ever were endured on earth! That a person who is the supreme Lord and judge of the world, should be arraigned, and should stand at the judgment-seat of mortal worms, and then be condemned. That a person who is the living God, and the fountain of life, should be put to death. That a person who created the world, and gives life to all his creatures, should be put to death by his own creatures. That a person of infinite majesty and glory, and so the object of the love, praises and adorations of angels, should be mocked and spit upon by the vilest of men. That a person infinitely good, and who is love itself, should suffer the greatest cruelty. That a person who is infinitely beloved of the Father, should be put to inexpressible anguish under his own Father's wrath. That he who is King of heaven, who hath heaven for his throne, and the earth for his footstool, should be buried in the prison of the grave! How wonderful is this! And yet this is the way that God's wisdom hath fixed upon, as the way of sinners' salvation; as neither unsuitable, nor dishonourable to Christ.

6. The last thing done to procure salvation for sinners, is Christ's *exaltation*. Divine wisdom saw it needful, or most expedient, that the same person who died upon the cross, should sit at his right hand, on his own throne, as supreme Governor of the world: and should have particularly the

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absolute disposal of all things relating to man's salvation, and should be the judge of the world. This was needful, because it was requisite that the same person who purchased salvation, should have the bestowing of it; for it is not fit, that God should at all transact with the fallen creature in a way of mercy, but by a Mediator. And this is exceedingly for the strengthening of the faith and comfort of the saints, that he who hath endured so much to purchase salvation for them, has all things in heaven and in earth delivered unto him; that he might bestow eternal life on them for whom he purchased it. And that the same person that loved them so greatly as to shed his precious blood for them, was to be their final judge.

This then was another thing full of wonders, that he who was man as well as God; he who was a servant, and died like a malefactor; should be made the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, angels and men; the absolute disposer of eternal life and death; the supreme judge of all created intelligent beings, for eternity; and should have committed to him all the governing power of God the Father; and that, not only as God, but as God-man, not exclusive of the human nature.

As it is wonderful, that a person who is truly *divine* should be humbled, so as to become a servant, and to suffer as a malefactor; so it is in like manner wonderful, that he who is God-man, not exclusive of the manhood, should be exalted to the power and honour of the great God of heaven and earth. But such wonders as these has infinite Wisdom contrived and accomplished in order to our salvation.

SECT. II.

In this Way of Salvation God is greatly glorified.

God has greatly glorified himself in the work of creation and providence. All his works praise him, and his glory shines brightly from them all; but as some stars differ from others in glory, so the glory of God shines brighter in some of his works than in others. And amongst all these, the work of redemption is like the sun in his strength. The glory of the author is abundantly the most resplendent in this work.

I. Each *attribute* of God is glorified in the work of redemption. How God has exceedingly glorified his *wisdom*, may more fully appear before we have done with this subject. But more particularly,

1. God hath exceedingly glorified his *power* in this work. —It shews the great and inconceivable power of God to unite natures so infinitely different, as the divine and human nature, in one person. If God can make one who is truly God, and

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one that is truly man, the self-same person, what is it that he cannot do? This is a greater and more marvellous work than creation.

The power of God most gloriously appears in man's being actually saved and redeemed in this way. In his being brought out of a state of sin and misery into a conformity to God; and at last to the full and perfect enjoyment of God. This is a more glorious demonstration of divine power, than creating things out of nothing, upon two accounts. One is, the *effect is greater and more excellent*. To produce the new creature, is a more glorious effect, than merely to produce a creature.—Making a holy creature, a creature in the spiritual image of God, in the image of the divine excellencies, and a partaker of the divine nature—is a greater effect than merely to give being. And therefore as the effect is greater, it is a more glorious manifestation of power.

And then, in this effect of the actual redemption of sinners, *the term from which, is more distant from the term to which*, than in the work of creation. The term from which, in the work of creation, is *nothing*, and the term to which, is *being*. But the term from which, in the work of redemption, is a state *infinitely worse than nothing;* and the term to which, *a holy and a happy being*, a state infinitely better than mere being. The terms in the production of the last, are much more remote from one another, than in the first.

And then the production of this last effect, is a more glorious manifestation of power, than the work of creation; because, though in creation, the terms are very distant—as *nothing* is very remote from *being*—yet there is no opposition. Nothing makes any opposition to the creating power of God. But in redemption, the divine power meets with, and overcomes great opposition. There is great opposition in a state of sin to a state of grace. Men's lusts and corruptions are exceedingly opposite to grace and holiness; and greatly resist the production of the effect. But this opposition is completely overcome in actual redemption.

Besides, there is great opposition from Satan. The power of God is very glorious in this work, because it therein conquers the strongest and most powerful enemies. Power never appears more illustrious than in conquering. Jesus Christ, in this work, conquers and triumphs over thousands of devils, strong and mighty spirits, uniting all their strength against him. Luke xi. 21. *When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoil.* Col. ii. 15. *And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in the cross.*

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2. The *justice* of God is exceedingly glorified in this work. God is so strictly and immutably just, that he would not spare his beloved Son when he took upon him the guilt of men's sins, and was substituted in the room of sinners. He would not abate him the least mite of that debt which justice demanded. Justice should take place, though it cost his infinitely dear Son his precious blood; and his enduring such extraordinary reproach, and pain, and death in its most dreadful form.

3. The *holiness* of God is also exceedingly glorious in this work. Never did God so manifest his hatred of sin as in the death and sufferings of his only begotten Son. Hereby he shewed himself unappeasable to sin, and that it was impossible for him to be at peace with it.

4. God hath also exceedingly glorified his *truth* in this way, both in his threatenings and promises. Herein is fulfilled the threatenings of the law, wherein God said, *In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. And cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.* God shewed hereby, that not only heaven and earth should pass away, but, which is more, that the blood of him who is the eternal Jehovah should be spilt, rather than one jot or tittle of his word should fail, till all be fulfilled.

5. And lastly, God has exceedingly glorified his *mercy* and love in this work. The mercy of God was an attribute never seen before in its exercises, till it was seen in this work of redemption, or the fruits of it. The goodness of God appeared towards the angels in giving them being and blessedness. It appeared glorious towards man in his primitive state, a state of holiness and happiness. But now God hath shewn that he can find in his heart to love sinners, who deserve his infinite hatred. And not only hath he shewn that he can love them, but love them so as to give them more and do greater things for them than ever he did for the holy angels, that never sinned nor offended their Creator. He loved sinful men so as to give them a greater gift than ever he gave the angels; so as to give his own Son, and not only to give him to be their possession and enjoyment; but to give him to be their sacrifice. And herein he has done more for them, than if he had given them all the visible world; yea, more than if he had given them all the angels, and all heaven besides. God hath loved them so, that hereby he purchased for them deliverance from eternal misery, and the possession of immortal glory.

II. Each *person* of the Trinity is exceedingly glorified in this work. Herein the work of redemption is distinguished from all the other works of God. The attributes of God are glorious in his other works; but the three persons of the

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Trinity are distinctly glorified in no work as in this of redemption. In this work every distinct person has his distinct parts and offices assigned him. Each one has his particular and distinct concern in it, agreeable to their distinct, personal properties, relations, and economical offices. The redeemed have an equal concern with, and dependence upon each person, in this affair, and owe equal honour and praise to each of them.

The Father appoints and provides the Redeemer, and accepts the price of redemption. The Son is the Redeemer and the price. He redeems by offering up himself. The Holy Ghost immediately communicates to us the thing purchased; yea, and he is the good purchased. The sum of what Christ purchased for us is holiness and happiness. But the Holy Ghost is the great principle both of all holiness and happiness. The Holy Ghost is the sum of all that Christ purchased for men. Gal. iii. 13, 14. *He was made a curse for us, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit, through faith.*

The blessedness of the redeemed consists in partaking of Christ's fulness, which consists in partaking of that Spirit, which is given not by measure unto him. This is the oil that was poured upon the head of the church, which ran down to the members of his body, to the skirts of his garment. Thus we have an equal concern with, and dependence upon each of the persons of the Trinity, distinctly; upon the Father, as he provides the Redeemer, and the person of whom the purchase is made;—the Son as the purchaser, and the price;—the Holy Ghost as the good purchased.

SECT. III.

The Good attained by Salvation is wonderfully Various and exceeding Great.

HERE we may disinctly consider—*the variety*—and the *greatness* of the good procured for men.

I. The good procured by salvation is wonderfully *various.* Here are all sorts of good procured for fallen man, that he *does* or *can* really need, or is *capable* of. The wisdom of God appears in the way of salvation, in that it is most worthy of an infinitely wise God, because every way perfect and sufficient. We, in our fallen state, are most necessitous creatures, full of wants; but they are here all answered. Every sort of good is here procured; whatever would really contribute to our happiness, and even many things we could not have thought of, had not Christ purchased them for us, and revealed

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them to us. Every demand of our circumstances, and craving of our natures, is here exactly answered.——For instance,

1. We stand in need of *peace* with God. We had provoked God to anger, his wrath abode upon us, and we needed to have it appeased. This is done for us in this way of salvation; for Christ, by shedding his blood, has fully satisfied justice, and appeased God's wrath, for all that shall believe in him. By the sentence of the law we were condemned to hell; and we needed to have our sins pardoned, that we might be delivered from hell. But in this work, pardon of sin and deliverance from hell, is fully purchased for us.

2. We needed not only to have God's wrath appeased, and our sins pardoned; but we needed to have the *favour* of God. To have God, not only not our enemy, but our friend. Now God's favour is purchased for us by the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

3. We needed not only to be delivered from hell, but to have some *satisfying happiness* bestowed. Man has a natural craving and thirst after happiness; and will thirst and crave, till his capacity is filled. And his capacity is of vast extent; and nothing but an infinite good can fill, and satisfy his desires. But, notwithstanding provision is made in this way of salvation to answer those needs, there is a satisfying happiness purchased for us; that which is fully answerable to the capacity and cravings of our souls.

Here is food procured to answer all the appetites and faculties of our souls. God has made the soul of man of a spiritual nature; and therefore he needs a corresponding happiness; some spiritual object, in the enjoyment of which he may be happy. Christ has purchased the enjoyment of God, who is the great and original Spirit, as the portion of our souls. And he hath purchased the Spirit of God to come and dwell in us as an internal principle of happiness.

God hath made man a rational, intelligent creature; and man needs some good that shall be a suitable object of his understanding, for him to contemplate; wherein he may have full and sufficient exercise for his capacious faculties, in their utmost extent. Here is an object that is great and noble, and worthy of the exercise of the noblest faculties of the rational soul. God himself should be theirs, for them for ever to behold and contemplate; his glorious perfections and works are most worthy objects; and there is room enough for improving them, and still to exercise their faculties to all eternity.—What object can be more worthy to exercise the understanding of a rational soul, than the glories of the Divine Being, with which the heavenly intelligences, and even the infinite understanding of God himself is entertained!

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Our souls need some good that shall be a suitable object of the will and affections; a suitable object for the choice, the acquiescence, the love, and the joy of the rational soul. Provision is made for this also in this way of salvation. There is an infinitely excellent Being offered to be chosen, to be rested in, to be loved, to be rejoiced in, by us; even God himself, who is infinitely lovely, the fountain of all good; a fountain that can never be exhausted, where we can be in no danger of going to excess, in our love and joy; and here we may be assured ever to find our joy and delight in enjoyments answerable to our love and desires.

4. There is all possible enjoyment of this object, procured in this way of salvation. When persons entirely set their love upon another, they naturally desire to *see* that person; merely to hear of the person, does not satisfy love. So here is provision made that we should see God, the object of our supreme love. Not only that we should hear and read of him in his word, but that we should see him with a spiritual eye here: and not only so, but that we should have the satisfaction of seeing God face to face hereafter. This is promised, (Matt. v. 8.) *Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.* It is promised, that we shall not see God, as through a glass darkly, as we do now, but face to face. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. That we shall see Christ as he is. 1 John iii. 2.

We naturally desire not only to see those whom we love, but to *converse with* them. Provision is made for this also, that we should have spiritual conversation with God while in this world; and that we should be hereafter admitted to converse with Christ in the most intimate manner possible. Provision is made in this way of salvation, that we should converse with God much more intimately, than otherwise it would have been possible for us; for now Christ is incarnate, is in our nature: he is become one of us, whereby we are under advantages for an immensely more free and intimate converse with him, than could have been, if he had remained only in the divine nature; and so in a nature infinitely distant from us.—We naturally desire not only to converse with those whom we greatly love, but to *dwell* with them. Provision, through Christ, is made for this. It is purchased and provided that we should dwell with God in his own house in heaven, which is called our father's house.—To dwell for ever in God's presence, and at his right hand.

We naturally desire to have a *right* in that person whom we greatly love. Provision is made, in this way of salvation, that we should have a right *in* God; a right *to* him. This is the promise of the covenant of grace, "That he will be our God." God, with all his glorious perfections and attributes, with all his power and wisdom, and with all his majesty and

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glory, will be ours; so that we may call him our inheritance, and the portion of our souls: what we can humbly claim by faith, having this portion made over to us by a firm instrument; by a covenant ordered in all things and sure.—And we may also hereby claim a right to Jesus Christ. Love desires that the right should be *mutual*. The lover desires, not only to have a right to the beloved, but *that the beloved should also have a right to him:* he desires to be his beloved's, as well as his beloved should be his. Provision is also made for this, in this wise method of salvation, that God should have a special propriety in the redeemed, that they should be in a distinguishing manner *his:* that they should be his *peculiar* people. We are told that God sets apart the godly for himself, Ps. iv. 3. They are called God's jewels. The spouse speaks it with great satisfaction and rejoicing, Cant. ii. 16. *My beloved is mine, and I am his.*

Love desires to stand in some *near relation* to the beloved. Provision is made by Christ, that we should stand in the nearest possible relation to God; that he should be our father, and we should be his children. We are often instructed in the holy scriptures, that God is the father of believers, and that they are his family.—And not only so, but they stand in the nearest relation to Christ Jesus. There is the closest union possible. The souls of believers are married to Christ. The church is the bride, the lamb's wife. Yea, there is yet a nearer relation than can be represented by such a similitude. Believers are as the very members of Christ, and of his flesh and of his bones, Eph. v. 30. Yea, this is not near enough yet, but *they are one spirit*, 1 Cor. vi. 17.

Love naturally inclines to a *conformity* to the beloved. To have those excellencies, upon the account of which he is beloved, copied in himself. Provision is made in this way of salvation, that we may be conformed to God; that we shall be transformed into the same image, 2 Cor. iii. 18. *We all with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.*—And that hereafter we shall see him as he is, and be like him.

It is the natural desire of love to *do something* for the beloved, either for his pleasure or honour. Provision is made for this also in this way of salvation; that we should be made instruments of glorifying God, and promoting his kingdom here, and of glorifying him to all eternity.

5. In this way of salvation, provision is made for our having *every sort of good* that man naturally craves; as honour, wealth, and pleasure.—Here is provision made that we should be brought to the highest *honour*. This is what God has promised, *that those that honour him, he will honour.* And that true Christians shall be kings and priests unto God.——Christ

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has promised, *that as his Father has appointed unto him a kingdom, so he will appoint unto them, that they may eat and drink at his table in his kingdom.* He has promised to crown them with a crown of glory, and that *they shall sit with him in his throne. That he will confess their names before his Father, and before his angels. That he will give them a new name;* and that they *shall walk with him in white.*

Christ has also purchased for them the *greatest wealth.* All those that are in Christ are rich. They are *now* rich. They have the *best* riches; being rich in faith, and the graces of the Spirit of God. They have gold tried in the fire. They have durable riches and righteousness. They have treasure in heaven, where neither thief approacheth, nor moth corrupteth. An inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. They are possessors of all things.

Christ has also purchased *pleasure* for them; pleasures that are immensely preferable to all the pleasures of sense, most exquisitely sweet, and satisfying. He has purchased for them fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore at God's right hand; and they shall drink of the river of God's pleasure.

6. Christ has purchased all needed good *both for soul and body.* While we are here, we stand in need of these earthly things; and of these Christ has purchased all that are best for us. He has purchased for the body, that God should feed, and clothe us. Matt. vi. 26. *How much more shall he* FEED *you, O ye of little faith!* How much more shall he *clothe* you! Christ has purchased, that God should take care of us, and provide what is needed of these things, as a father provides for his children. 1 Pet. v. 7. *Casting your care upon him, for he careth for you.*

7. Christ has purchased good that is suitable for his people *in all conditions.* There is, in this way of salvation, respect had to, and provision made for all circumstances, that they can be in. Here is provision made for a time of affliction—for a time of poverty and pinching want—for a time of bereavement and mourning—for spiritual darkness—for a day of temptation—for a time of persecution—and for a time of death. Here is such a provision made that is sufficient to carry a person above death, and all its terrors; and to give him a complete triumph over that king of terrors. Here is enough to sweeten the grave, and make it cease to seem terrible. Yea, enough to make death in prospect to seem desirable; and in its near approach to be not terrible but joyful.

8. There is provision made in this way of salvation for the life and blessedness of soul and body *to all eternity.* Christ has purchased, that we should be delivered from a state of temporal death, as well as *spiritual* and *eternal.* The bodies of the saints shall be raised to life. He has purchased all manner

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of perfection for the body of which it is capable. It shall be raised a spiritual body in incorruption and glory, and be made like Christ's glorious body, to shine as the sun in the kingdom of his Father, and to exist in a glorified state in union with the soul to all eternity.

9. But man in his fallen state still needs something else in order to his happiness, than that these fore-mentioned blessings should be purchased for him, *viz.* He needs to be *qualified* for the possession and enjoyment of them. In order to our having a title to *these* blessings of the covenant of grace, (so that we can scripturally *claim* an interest in them,) there is a certain condition must be performed by us. We must *believe* in the Lord Jesus Christ, and *accept* of him as offered in the gospel for a Saviour. But, as we cannot do this of ourselves, Christ has purchased this also for all the elect. He has purchased, that they shall have faith given them; whereby they shall be [actively] united to Christ, and to have a [pleadable] title to his benefits.

But still something further is necessary for man, in order to his coming to the actual possession of the inheritance. A man, as soon as he has believed, has a title to the inheritance: but in order to come to the actual possession of it, he must *persevere* in a way of holiness. There is not only a gate that must be entered; but there is a narrow way that must be travelled, before we can arrive at heavenly blessedness; and that is a way of universal and persevering holiness. But men, after they have believed, cannot persevere in a way of holiness, of themselves. But there is sufficient provision made for this also, in the way of salvation by Jesus Christ. The matter of a saint's perseverance is sufficiently secured by the purchase that Christ has made.

But still there is something else needful in order to qualify a person for the actual entering upon the enjoyments and employments of a glorified estate, *viz.* that he should be made *perfectly holy:* that all remainders of sin should be taken away; for there cannot any sin enter into heaven. No soul must go into the glorious presence of God, with the least degree of the filth of sin. But there is provision made: for Christ has purchased that all sin shall be taken away out of the hearts of believers at death; and that they should be made perfectly holy: whereby they shall be fully and perfectly qualified to enter upon the pleasures and enjoyments of the new Jerusalem.

Christ has purchased all, both objective and inherent good: not only a portion to be enjoyed by us; but all those inherent qualifications necesary to our enjoyment of it. He has purchased not only justification, but sanctification and glorification; both holiness and happiness.—Having considered the

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good attained in the way of salvation as *manifold* and various, I now proceed, as proposed.

II. To consider the good attained for us by this way of salvation, as *exceeding great.*

There is not only every sort of good we need, but of every sort in *that degree*, so as to answer the extent of our capacity, and the greatest stretch of our desires, and indeed of our concept ons. They are not only greater than our conceptions are here, but also greater than ever they could be, were it not that God's relation, and our own experience will teach us. They are greater than the tongue of angels can declare, the *deliverance* that we have in it is exceeding great; it is deliverance from guilt, from sin itself, from the anger of God, and from the miseries of hell.

How great is the *good conferred!* The objective good is the infinite God, and the glorious Redeemer, Jesus Christ. How great is the love of the Father, and the Son! And how near the relation between them and the true believer. How close the union, how intimate the communion, and ultimately how clear will be the vision in glory!

There are great *communications* made to the believing soul, on earth, but how much greater in heaven. Then their conformity to God will be perfect, their enjoyment of him will be full, their honour great and unsullied, and the glory of body and soul ineffable. The riches of the Christian are immense; all things are included in his treasure. Pleasures unspeakably and inconceivably great await him; rivers of delight, fulness of joy; and all of infinite duration.

The benefit procured for us, is *doubly* infinite. Our deliverance is an infinite benefit, because the evil we are delivered from, is infinite; and the positive good bestowed is eternal; *viz.* the full enjoyment of all those blessings merited.

SECT. IV.

How Angels are benefited by the Salvation of Men.

So hath the wisdom of God contrived this affair, that the benefit of what he has done therein, should be so extensive, as to reach the elect angels. It is for men that the work of redemption is wrought out; and yet the benefit of the things done in this work is not confined to them, though all that is properly called *redemption*, or included in it, is confined to men. The angels cannot partake in this, having never fallen; yet they have great indirect benefit by it.—God hath so wisely ordered, that what has been done in this directly and especially for men, should redound to the exceeding benefit of all intelli-

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gent creatures who are in favour with God. The benefit of it is so diffusive as to reach heaven itself. So great and manifold is the good attained in this work, that those glorious spirits who are so much above us, and were so highly exalted in happiness before, yet should receive great addition hereby.—I will shew *how* in some particulars.

1. The angels hereby see a great and wonderful manifestation of the glory of God. The happiness of angels as well as of men consists very much in beholding the glory of God. The excellency of the divine Being is a most delightful subject of contemplation to the saints on earth; but much more to the angels in heaven. The more holy any being is, the more sweet and delightful will it be to him to behold the glory and beauty of the supreme Being.—Therefore the beholding of the glory of God must be ravishing to the holy angels, who are perfect in holiness, and never had their minds leavened with sin. The manifestations of the glory of God, are as it were the food that satisfies the angels; they live thereon. It is their greatest happiness.

It is without doubt much of their employment to behold the glory of God appearing in his works. Therefore this work of redemption greatly contributes to their happiness and delight, as the glory of God is so exceedingly manifested by it. For what is done, is done in the sight of the angels, as is evident by many passages of holy scripture. And they behold the glory of God appearing herein with entertainment and delight; as it is manifest by 1 Pet. i. 12. *Which things the angels desire to look into.*

The angels have this advantage, that now they may behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, where it shines with a peculiar lustre and brightness. 1 Tim. iii. 5. *Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels.* Perhaps all God's attributes are more gloriously manifested in this work, than in any other that ever the angels saw. There is certainly a fuller manifestation of some of his attributes, than ever they saw before; as is evident by the text. And especially, it is so with respect to the mercy of God, that sweet and endearing attribute of the divine nature. The angels of heaven never saw so much grace manifested before, as in the work of redemption; nor is any measure equal to it. How full of joy doth it fill the hearts of the angels, to see such a boundless and bottomless ocean of love and grace in their God! And therefore with what rejoicing do all the angels praise Christ for his being slain! Rev. v. 11, 12. *And I beheld and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that*

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was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

2. They have this benefit by it, that hereby Jesus Christ, God-man, is become their head. God, subsisting in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, was the King of angels, and would have been, if it had not been for our redemption. But it was owing to what is done in this work, that Jesus Christ, as God-man, becomes the head of the angels. Christ is now not only the head of angels simply as God, but as God-man. Col. ii. 10. *And ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power.* Eph. i. 20—22. *Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him on his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church.*

This is a part of the exaltation and glory of Christ, which God confers on him as his reward. And not only so, but it is greatly to the angels' benefit. It is God's manner in his dealings with his elect creatures, in the same works wherein he glorifies himself, or his Son, greatly to benefit them. The same dealings of his that are most for his glory, shall be most for their good.—That Christ, God-man, should be made the head of the angels, is greatly to their benefit several ways.

(1.) Because they become hereby more nearly *related* to so glorious a person, the Son of God, than otherwise they would have. The angels esteem it a great honour done them to be related to such a person as Jesus Christ, God-man, who is an infinitely honourable person.

The angels, by Christ becoming their head, are with the saints gathered together in one in Christ, Eph. i. 10. They by virtue hereof, though Christ be not their Redeemer as he is ours, have a right and propriety in this glorious person, as well as we. He is theirs: though not their Saviour, yet he is their head of government, and head of influence.

(2.) Again, this is greatly to their *benefit;* as they are under advantages for a far more intimate converse with God. The divine nature is at an infinite distance from the nature of angels, as well as from the nature of man. This distance forbids a familiarity and intimacy of intercourse.—It is therefore a great advantage to the angels, that God is come down to them in a created nature; and in that nature is become their head; so that their intercourse and enjoyment may be more intimate. They are invited by the similar qualifications of the created nature, with which the Son of God is invested.

(3.) It is for the benefit of the angels, as hereby the elect

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of mankind are gathered into their society. Christ by the work of redemption, gathers in the elect of mankind to join the angels of heaven. Eph. i. 10. *That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.* Men are brought in to join with the angels in their work of praising God; to partake with them of their enjoyments. The angels greatly rejoice at this. They rejoice when but one person is gathered in, as Christ teaches us, Luke xv. 10. *Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.* The heavenly society is made more complete by this accession of the saints to it; they contribute to the happiness of each other. The angels rejoice that others are added to join them and assist them in praising God.—And thus the vacancy by the fall of angels is filled up.

(4.) It tends to make the angels to prize their happiness the more, when they see how much it costs to purchase the same happiness for man. Though they knew so much, yet they are not incapable of being taught more and more the worth of their own happiness. For when they saw how much it cost to purchase the same happiness for man, even the precious blood of the Son of God; this tended to give them a great sense of the infinite value of their happiness. They never saw such a testimony of the value of the eternal enjoyment of God before.

Thus we have shewn, how the wisdom of God appears in the work of redemption in the good ends attained thereby, with respect to God, men, and good angels.

But are there any good ends obtained with respect to *bad* angels, God's grand enemies? Undoubtedly there are, as may appear from the few following considerations. Satan and his angels rebelled against God in heaven, and proudly presumed to try their strength with his. And when God by his almighty power overcame the strength of Satan, and sent him like lightning from heaven to hell with all his army; Satan still hoped to get the victory by subtilty. Though he could not overcome by power, yet he hoped to succeed by craft; and so by his subtilty to disappoint God of his end in creating this lower world.—God therefore has shewn his great wisdom in overthrowing Satan's design. He has disappointed the devices of the crafty, so that they cannot perform their enterprize; he has carried their counsel headlong.

1. Satan thought to have disappointed God of his glory, which he designed in creating this lower world; and to make mankind be for his own glory, in setting up himself god over them. Now Christ, by what he has done in the work of redemption, has overthrown Satan; and utterly frustrated him

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as to this end. God is exceedingly glorified in the elect, to the surprise of angels and devils. God by redemption has all the glory that he intended, and more than either men, angels, or devils imagined that God intended. God might have glorified his justice in the destruction of all mankind. But it was God's design in creating the world, to glorify his goodness and love; and not only to be glorified eventually, but to be served and glorified actually by men. Satan intended to frustrate God of this end; but, by the redemption of Jesus Christ his design is confounded.

2. Another design of the devil, was to gratify his envy in the utter destruction of mankind. But, by the redemption of Jesus Christ, this malicious design of Satan is crossed: because all the elect are brought to their designed happiness; which is much greater than ever Satan thought it was in God's heart to bestow on man. And though some of mankind are left to be miserable, yet that does not answer Satan's end; for this also is ordered for God's glory. No more are left miserable than God saw meet to glorify his justice upon.

One end why God suffered Satan to do what he did in procuring the fall of man, was that his Son might be glorified in conquering that strong, subtle, and proud spirit, and triumphing over him. How glorious doth Christ Jesus appear in baffling and triumphing over this proud king of darkness, and all the haughty confederate rulers of hell! How glorious a sight is it to see the meek and patient Lamb of God leading that proud, malicious and mighty enemy in triumph! What songs doth this cause in heaven! It was a glorious sight in Israel to see David carrying the head of Goliath in triumph to Jerusalem. It appeared glorious to the daughters of Israel, who came out with timbrels and with dances, and sang, *Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.* But how much more glorious to see the son of David, the Son of God, carrying the head of the spiritual Goliath, the champion of the armies of hell, in triumph to the heavenly Jerusalem! It is with a principal view to this, that Christ is called, *the Lord of hosts, or armies, and a man of war,* Exod. xv. 3. And Psalm xxiv. 8. *Who is this king of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.*

SECT. V.

In this Way of Salvation wonderful Glory redounds to God, as the Effect of Divine Wisdom.

1. By this contrivance for our redemption, God's greatest dishonour is made an *occasion* of his greatest glory. Sin is a

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thing by which God is greatly dishonoured; the nature of its principle is enmity against God, and contempt of him. And man, by his rebellion, has greatly dishonoured God. But this dishonour, by the contrivance for our redemption, is made an occasion of the greatest manifestation of God's glory that ever was. Sin, the greatest evil, is made an occasion of the greatest good. It is the nature of a principle of sin that it seeks to dethrone God: but this is hereby made an occasion of the greatest manifestation of God's royal majesty and glory that ever was. By sin, man has slighted and despised God: but this is made an occasion of his appearing the more greatly honourable. Sin casts contempt upon the authority and law of God: but this, by the contrivance for our redemption, is made the occasion of the greatest honour done to that same authority, and to that very law. It was a greater honour to the law of God that Christ was subject to it, and obeyed it, than if all mankind had obeyed it. It was a greater honour to God's authority that Christ shewed such great respect, and such entire subjection to it, than the perfect obedience of all the angels in heaven. Man by his sin shewed his enmity against the holiness of God; but this is made an occasion of the greatest manifestation of God's holiness. The holiness of God never appeared to so great a degree, as when God executed vengeance upon his own dear Son.

2. So has the wisdom of God contrived that those attributes are glorified in man's salvation, whose glory seemed to require his *destruction*. When man had fallen, several attributes of God seemed to require his destruction. The justice of God requires, that sin be punished as it deserves: but it deserves no less than eternal destruction. God proclaims it as a part of the glory of his nature, that he will in no wise clear the guilty, Exod. xxxiv. 7. The holiness of God seemed to require man's destruction; for God by his holiness infinitely hates sin. This seemed to require therefore that God should manifest a proportionable hatred of the sinner; and that he should be for ever an enemy unto him. The truth of God seemed also to require man's destruction; for eternal death was what God had threatened for sin, one jot or tittle of which threatening cannot by any means pass away. But yet so has God contrived, that those very attributes not only allow of man's redemption, and are not inconsistent with it, but they are glorified in it. Even vindictive justice is glorified in the death and sufferings of Christ. The holiness of God, or his holy hatred of sin, that seemed to require man's damnation, is seen in Christ's dying for sinners. So herein also is manifested and glorified the truth of God, in the threatenings of the law.

3. Yea, it is so ordered now that the glory of these attri-

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butes *requires* the salvation of those that believe. The justice of God that required man's damnation, and seemed inconsistent with his salvation, now as much requires the salvation of those that believe in Christ, as ever before it required their damnation. Salvation is an absolute debt to the believer from God, so that he may in justice demand it, on account of what his surety has done. For Christ has satisfied justice fully for his sin; so that it is but a thing that may be challenged, that God should now release the believer from the punishment; it is but a piece of justice, that the creditor should release the debtor, when he has fully paid the debt. And again, the believer may demand eternal life, because it has been merited by Christ, by a merit of condignity. So is it contrived, that that justice that seemed to require man's destruction, now requires his salvation.

So the truth of God that seemed to require man's damnation, now requires his salvation. At the same time that the threatening of the law stands good, there is a promise of eternal life to many who have broken the law. They both stand good at the same time; and the truth of God requires that both should be fulfilled. How much soever they seemed to clash, yet so is the matter contrived in this way of salvation, that both are fulfilled and do not interfere one with another.

At the very time that God uttered the threatening, *In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;* and at the time that Adam had first eaten the forbidden fruit; there was then an existing promise, that many thousands of Adam's race should obtain eternal life. This promise was made to Jesus Christ, before the world was. What a difficulty and an inconsistence, did there seem to be here? But it was no difficulty to the wisdom of God, that the promise and the threatening should be both fully accomplished to the glory of God's truth in each of them. Psal. lxxxv. 10. *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*

4. Those very attributes which semed to require man's destruction, are *more glorious* in his salvation, than they would have been in his destruction. The revenging justice of God is a great deal more *manifested* in the death of Christ, than it would have been if all mankind had been sufferers to all eternity. If man had remained under the guilt and imputation of sin, the justice of God would not have had such a *trial*, as it had, when his own Son was under the imputation of sin. If all mankind had stood guilty, and justice had called for vengeance upon them, that would not have been such a trial of the inflexibleness and unchangeableness of the justice of God, as when his own Son, who was the object of his infinite

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love, and in whom he infinitely delighted, stood with the imputation of guilt upon him.

This was the greatest trial that could be, to manifest whether God's justice was perfect and unchangeable, or not; whether God was so just that he would not upon any account abate of what justice required; and whether God would have any respect to persons in judgment.

So the *majesty* of God appears much more in the sufferings of Christ than it would have done in the eternal sufferings of all mankind. The majesty of a prince appears greater in the just punishment of great personages under the guilt of treason, than of inferior persons. The sufferings of Christ have this advantage over the eternal sufferings of the wicked, for impressing upon the minds of the spectators a sense of the dread majesty of God, and his infinite hatred of sin; *viz.* that the eternal sufferings of the wicked never will be seen actually accomplished, and finished; whereas they have seen that which is equivalent to those eternal sufferings actually fulfilled and finished in the sufferings of Christ.

5. Such is the wisdom of this way of salvation, that the more any of the elect have dishonoured God, the more is God glorified in this redemption. Such wonders as these are accomplished by the wisdom of this way of salvation. Such things as these, if they had been proposed to any created intelligence, would have seemed strange and unaccountable paradoxes, till the counsels of divine wisdom concerning the matter were unfolded.

So sufficient is this way of salvation, that it is not inconsistent with any of God's attributes to save the chief of sinners. However great a sinner any one has been, yet God can, if he pleases, save without any injury to the glory of any one attribute. And not only so, but the more sinful any one has been, the more doth God glorify himself in his salvation. The more doth he glorify his power, that he can redeem one in whom sin so abounds, and of whom Satan has such strong possession.—The greater triumph has Christ over his grand adversary, in redeeming, and setting at liberty from his bondage those that were his greatest vassals. The more doth the sufficiency of Christ appear, in that it is sufficient for such vile wretches.

The more is the sovereignty, and boundless extent of the mercy of God manifested, in that it is sufficient to redeem those that are most undeserving. Rom. v. 20. *Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.*

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SECT. VI.

How the Wisdom of God appears in the Manner and Circumstances of obtaining the Good intended.

We now come to take notice of some wonderful circumstances of the attainment of our good, hereby; which shews the great wisdom of this contrivance.

1. So hath God contrived in this way, that a sinful creature should become not guilty; and that he who has no righteousness of his own, should become righteous. These things, if they had been proposed, would have appeared contradictions to any but the divine understanding.

If it had been proposed to any created intelligence, to find out a way in which a *sinful* creature should not be a *guilty* creature, how impossible would it have been judged, that there should be any way at all. It would doubtless have been judged impossible but that he who has committed sin, must stand guilty of the sin he has committed; and if sin necessarily obliges to punishment, it must oblige him who has committed it. If punishment and sin be inseparable, then that punishment and the sinner are inseparable. If the law denounces death to the person who is guilty of sin, and if it be impossible, that the law should not take place, then he who has committed sin must die. Thus any created understanding would have thought.

And if it had been proposed, that there should be some way found out, wherein man might be righteous without fulfilling righteousness himself: so that he might reasonably and properly be looked upon and accepted as a righteous person, and adjuged to the reward of righteousness, and yet have no righteousness of his own, but the contrary—that he should be righteous by the righteousness of the law, by a perfect righteousness, and yet have broken the law and done nothing else but break it—this doubtless would have been looked upon as impossible and contradictious.

But yet the wisdom of God has truly accomplished each of these things. He hath accomplished that men though sinners, should be without guilt, in that he hath found out a way that the threatenings of the law should truly and properly be fulfilled, and punishment be executed on sin, and yet not on the sinner. The sufferings of Christ answer the demands of the law, with respect to the sins of those who believe in him; and justice is truly satisfied thereby. And the law is fulfilled and answered by the obedience of Christ, so that his righteousness should properly be our righteousness. Though not performed

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by us, yet it is properly and reasonably accepted for us, as much as if we had performed it ourselves. Divine wisdom has so contrived, that such an interchanging of sin and righteousness should be consistent, and most agreeable with reason, with the law, and God's holy attributes. For Jesus Christ has so united himself to us, and us to him, as to make himself ours, our head. The love of Christ to the elect is so great, that God the Father looks upon it proper and suitable to account Christ and the elect as one; and accordingly to account what Christ does and suffers, as if they *did* and *suffered* it.—That love of Christ which is so great as to render him willing to put himself in the stead of the elect, and to bear the misery that they deserved, does, in the Father's account, so unite Christ and the elect, that they may be looked upon as legally one.

2. It shews wonderful wisdom that our good should be procured by such seemingly unlikely and opposite means, as the humiliation of the Son of God. When Christ was about to undertake that great work of redemption, he did not take that method that any creature-wisdom would have thought the most proper. Creature-wisdom would have determined that in order to his effectually and more gloriously accomplishing such a great work, he should rather have been exalted higher, if it had been possible, rather than humbled so low.—Earthly kings and princes, when they are about to engage in any great and difficult work, will put on their strength, and will appear in all their majesty and power, that they may be successful.—But when Christ was about to perform the great work of redeeming a lost world, the wisdom of God took an opposite method, and determined that he should be humbled and abased to a mean state, and appear in low circumstances. He did not deck himself with glory, but laid it aside. He emptied himself. Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8. *Being in the form of God—he made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*—Creature-wisdom would have thought that Christ, in order to perform this great work, should deck himself with all his strength; but divine wisdom determined, that he should be made weak, or put on the infirmities of human nature.

And why did divine wisdom determine that he should become thus weak? It was that he might be subject to want, and to suffering, and to the power and malice of his enemies. But then what advantage could it be to him in this work, to be subject to the power and malice of his enemies? It was the very design on which he came into the world, to overcome his enemies. Who would have thought that this was the way to overthrow them, that he should become weak and feeble, and

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for that very end that he might be subject to their power and malice. But this is the very means by which God determined, that Christ should prevail against his enemies, even that he should be subject to their power, that they might prevail against him, so as to put him to disgrace, and pain, and death.

What other but divine wisdom could ever have determined, that this was the way to be taken in order to being successful in the work of our redemption! This would have appeared to creature-wisdom the most direct course to be frustrated that could be devised. But it was indeed the way to glorious success, and the only way. *The foolishness of God is wiser than men.* 1 Cor. i. 25. God has brought strength out of weakness, glory out of ignominy and reproach. Christ's shame and reproach are the only means by which a way is made to our eternal honour.

The wisdom of God hath made Christ's humiliation the means of our exaltation; his coming down from heaven is that which brings us to heaven. The wisdom of God hath made life the fruit of death. The death of Christ was the only means by which we could have eternal life. The death of a person who was God, was the only way by which we could come to have life in God.—Here favour is made to arise out of wrath: our acceptance into God's favour out of God's wrath upon his own Son. A blessing rises out of a curse; our everlasting blessedness, from Christ being made a curse for us. Our righteousness is made to rise out of Christ's imputed guilt. He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God, 2 Cor. v. 21. By such wonderful means hath the wisdom of God procured our salvation.

3. Our sin and misery, by this contrivance are made an occasion of our greater blessedness. This is a very wonderful thing. It would have been a very wonderful thing if we had been merely restored from sin and misery, to be as we were before; but it was a much more wonderful thing that we should be brought to a higher blessedness than ever; and that our sin and misery should be the occasion of it, and should make way for it.

(1.) It was wonderful that *sin* should be made the occasion of our greater blessedness; for sin deserves misery. By our sin we had deserved to be everlastingly miserable; but this is so turned by divine wisdom, that it is made an occasion of our being more happy.—It was a strange thing that sin should be the occasion of any thing else but misery: but divine wisdom has found out a way whereby the sinner might not only escape being miserable, but that he should be happier than before he sinned; yea, than he would have been if he had never sinned at all. And this sin and unworthiness of his, are the occasion of this greater blessedness.

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(2.) It was a wonderful thing that man's own *misery* should be an occasion of his greater happiness. For happiness and misery are contraries; and man's misery was very great. He was under the wrath and curse of God, and condemned to everlasting burnings.—But the sin and misery of man, by this contrivance, are made an occasion of his being more happy, not only than he was before the fall, but than he would have been, if he never had fallen.

Our first parents, if they had stood and persevered in perfect obedience, till God had given them the fruit of the tree of life as a seal of their reward, would probably have been advanced to higher happiness: for they before were but in a state of probation for their reward. And it is not to be supposed but that their happiness was to have been greater after they had persisted in obedience, and had actually received the reward, than it was while they were in a state of trial for it. But by the redemption of Christ, the sin and misery of the elect are made an occasion of their being brought to a higher happiness than mankind would have had, if they had persisted in obedience till they had received the reward.—For,

1st. Man is hereby brought to a greater and nearer *union* with God. If man had never fallen, God would have remained man's friend; he would have enjoyed God's favour, and so would have been the object of Christ's favour, as he would have had the favour of all the persons of the Trinity.—But now Christ becoming our surety and Saviour, and having taken on him our nature, occasions between Christ and us an union of a quite different kind, and a nearer relation than otherwise would have been. The fall is the occasion of Christ's becoming our head, and the church his body. And believers are become his brethren, and spouse, in a manner that otherwise would not have been. And by our union with Christ we have a greater union with God the Father. We are sons by virtue of our union with the natural Son of God. Gal. iv. 4—6. *When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* And therefore Christ has taught us, in all our addresses to God, to call him our Father, in like manner as he calls him Father. John xx. 17. *Go tell my brethren, behold I ascend to my Father, and your Father.*

This is one of the wonderful things brought about by the work of redemption, that thereby our separation from God, is made an occasion of a greater union, than was before, or otherwise would have been.—When we fell, there was a dreadful separation made betwixt God and us, but this is made an occasion of a greater union. John xvii. 20—23.

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Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.

2dly. Man now has greater *manifestations* of the *glory*, and *love* of God, than otherwise he would have had. In the manifestations of these two things, man's happiness principally consists. Now man, by the work of redemption, has greater manifestation of both, than otherwise he would have had. We have already spoken particularly of the glory of God, and what advantages even the angels have by the discoveries of it in this work; but if *they* have such advantages, much more will *man*, who is far more directly concerned in this affair than they. Here are immediately greater displays of the love of God, than man had before he fell; or, as we may well suppose, than he would have had, if he had never fallen. God now manifests his love to his people, by sending his Son into the world, to die for them. There never would have been any such testimony of the love of God, if man had not fallen.

Christ manifests his love, by coming into the world, and laying down his life. This is the greatest testimony of divine love that can be conceived. Now surely the greater discoveries God's people have of his love to them, the more occasion will they have to rejoice in that love. Here will be a delightful theme for the saints to contemplate to all eternity, which they never could have had, if man never had fallen, *viz.* the dying love of Christ. They will have occasion now to sing that song for ever, Rev. i. 5, 6. *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to whom be glory and dominion for ever, amen.*

3dly. Man now has greater *motives* offered him to love God than otherwise he ever would have had. Man's happiness consists in mutual love between God and man; in seeing God's love to him, and in reciprocally loving God. And the more he sees of God's love to him, and the more he loves God, the more happy must he be. His love to God is as necessary in order to his happiness, as the seeing of God's love to him; for he can have no joy in beholding God's love to him, any otherwise than as he loves God. This makes the saints prize God's love to them; for *they love him.* If they did not love God, to see his love to them would not make them happy. But the more any person loves another, the more will he be delighted in the manifestations of that other's love. There is

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provision therefore made for both in the work of redemption. There are greater *manifestations* of the love of God to us, than there would have been if man had not fallen, and also there are greater *motives* to love him than otherwise there would have been. There are greater *obligations* to love him, for God has done more for us to win our love. Christ hath died for us.

Again, man is now brought to a more universal and immediate and *sensible dependence* on God, than otherwise he would have been. All his happiness is now *of* him, *through* him, *in* him. If man had not fallen, he would have had all his happiness of God, by his own righteousness; but now it is by the righteousness of Christ. He would have had all his holiness of God, but not so sensibly; because then he would have been holy from the beginning, as soon as he received his being; but now, he is first sinful and universally corrupt, and afterwards is made holy. If man had held his integrity, misery would have been a stranger to him; and therefore happiness would not have been so sensible a derivation from God, as it is now, when man looks to God from the deeps of distress, cries repeatedly to him, and waits upon him. He is convinced by abundant experience, that he has no place of resort but God, who is graciously pleased, in consequence of man's earnest and persevering suit, to appear to his relief, to take him out of the miry clay and horrible pit, set him upon a rock, establish his goings, and put a new song into his mouth.—By man's having thus a more immediate, universal, and sensible dependence, God doth more entirely secure man's undivided respect. There is a greater motive for man to make God his all in all, —to love him and rejoice in him as his only portion.

4thly. By the contrivance for our salvation, man's sin and misery are but an occasion of his being brought to a more full and free *converse* with, and *enjoyment* of God than otherwise would have been. For as we have observed already, the union is greater; and the greater the union, the more full the communion, and intimate the intercourse.—Christ is come down to man in his own nature; and hereby he may converse with Christ more intimately, than the infinite distance of the divine nature would allow. This advantage is more than what the angels have. For Christ is not only in a *created* nature, but he *is in man's own nature*.—We have also advantages for a more full *enjoyment* of God. By Christ's incarnation, the saints may see God with their bodily eyes, as well as by an intellectual view. The saints, after the day of judgment, will consist of both body and soul; they will have outward as well as spiritual sight. It is now ordered by divine wisdom, that God himself, or a divine person, should be the principal entertainment of both these kinds of sight, spiritual and corporeal;

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and the saints in heaven shall not only have an intellectual sight of God, but they shall see a divine person as they see one another; not only spiritually, but outwardly. The body of Jesus Christ will appear with that transcendent visible majesty and beauty, which is exceedingly expressive of the divine majesty, beauty, and glory. The body of Christ shall appear with the glory of God upon it, as Christ tells us, Matt. xvi. 27. *The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father.* Thus to see God will be a great happiness to the saints. Job comforted himself that he should see God with his bodily eyes, Job xix. 26. *And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.*

5thly. Man's sin and misery is made an occasion of his greater happiness, as he has now a greater relish of happiness, by reason of his knowledge of both. In order to happiness, there must be two things, *viz.* union to a proper object—and a relish of the object. Man's misery is made an occasion of increasing both these by the work of redemption. We have shewn already, that the union is increased; and so is the relish too, by the knowledge man now has of evil. These contraries, good and evil, heighten the sense of one another. The forbidden tree was called the tree of knowledge of good and evil; of *evil*, because by it we came to the experience of evil; of *good*, because we should never have known so well what good was, if it had not been for that tree. We are taught the value of good, by our knowledge of its contrary, evil. This teaches us to prize good, and makes us the more to relish and rejoice in it. The saints know something what a state of sin and alienation from God is. They know something what the anger of God is, and what it is to be in danger of hell. And this makes them the more exceedingly to rejoice in the favour and in the enjoyment of God.

Take two persons; one who never knew what evil was, but was happy from the first moment of his being, having the favour of God, and numerous tokens of it; another who is in a very doleful and undone condition. Let there be bestowed upon these two persons the same blessings [subjectively,] the same good things; and let them be objectively in the same glorious circumstances,—and which will rejoice most?—Doubtless he that was brought to this happiness out of a miserable and doleful state. So the saints in heaven will for ever the more rejoice in God, and in the enjoyment of his love, for their being brought to it out of a most lamentable state and condition.

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SECT. VII.

Some wonderful Circumstances of the Overthrow of Satan.

The wisdom of God greatly and remarkably appears in so exceedingly baffling and confounding all the subtilty of the old serpent. Power never appears so conspicuous as when opposed and conquering opposition. The same may be said of wisdom; it never appears so brightly, and with such advantage, as when opposed by the subtilty of some very crafty enemy; and in baffling and confounding that subtilty. The devil is exceeding subtile. The subtilty of the serpent is emblematical of his, Gen. iii. 1. He was once one of the bright intelligences of heaven, and one of the brightest, if not the very brightest of all. And all the devils were once morning stars, of a glorious brightness of understanding. They still have the same faculties, though they ceased to be influenced and guided by the holy Spirit of God; and so their heavenly wisdom is turned into hellish craft and subtilty.—God in the work of redemption hath wondrously baffled the utmost craft of the devils, and though they are all combined to frustrate God's designs of glory to himself, and goodness to men.—The wisdom of God appears very glorious herein. For,

1. Consider the weak and seemingly despicable means and weapons that God employs to overthrow Satan. Christ poured the greater contempt upon Satan in the victory that he obtained over him, by reason of the means of his preparing himself for it, and the weapons he hath used. Christ chooses to encounter Satan in the human nature, in a poor, frail, afflicted state. He did as David did. David, when going against the Philistine, refused Saul's armour, a helmet of brass, a coat of mail, and his sword. No, he puts them all off. Goliath comes mightily armed against David, with a helmet of brass upon his head, a coat of mail weighing five thousand shekels of brass, greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders; a spear, whose staff was like a weaver's beam; and the spear's head weighing six hundred shekels of iron. And besides all this, he had one bearing a shield before him. But David takes nothing but a staff in his hand, and a shepherd's bag and a sling; and he goes against the Philistine. So the weapons that Christ made use of were his poverty, afflictions and reproaches, sufferings and death. His principal weapon was his cross, the instrument of his own reproachful death. These were seemingly weak and despicable instruments, to wield against such a giant as Satan. And doubtless the devil disdained them as much as Goliath did David's staves

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and sling. But with such weapons as these has Christ, human, weak, mortal nature, overthrown and baffled all the craft of hell.

Such disgrace and contempt has Christ poured upon Satan. David had a more glorious victory over Goliath for conquering him with such mean instruments: and Samson over the Philistines for killing so many of them with such a despicable weapon as the jaw-bone of an ass. It is spoken of in scripture as a glorious triumph of Christ over the devil, that he should overcome him by such a despicable weapon as his cross. Col. ii. 14, 15. *Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross: and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*—God shews his great and infinite wisdom in taking this method, to confound the wisdom and subtilty of his enemies. He hereby shews how easily he can do it, and that he is infinitely wiser than they. 1 Cor. i. 27—29. *God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things that are mighty: and the base things of the world, and things that are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things that are not, to bring to nought the things that are.*

2. God has hereby confounded Satan with his own weapons. It is so contrived in the work of redemption, that our grand enemy should be made a means of his own confusion: and that, by those very things whereby he endeavours to rob God of his glory, and to destroy mankind, he is made an instrument of frustrating his own designs. His most subtile and powerful endeavours for accomplishing his designs are made a means of confounding them, and of promoting the contrary. Of this, I will mention but two instances. *First.* His procuring man's fall is made an occasion of the contrary to what he designed. Indeed he has hereby procured the ruin of multitudes of mankind, which he aimed at. But in this he does not frustrate God's design from all eternity to glorify himself; and the misery of multitudes of mankind will prove no content to him, but will enhance his own misery.

What Satan did in tempting man to fall, is made an occasion of the contrary to what he intended, in that it gave occasion for God to glorify himself the more; and giveth occasion for the elect being brought to higher happiness.

The happy state of man was envied by Satan. That man who was of earthly original should be advanced to such honours, when he who was originally of a so much more noble nature should be cast down to such disgrace, his pride could not bear. How then would Satan triumph, when he had brought him down!

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The devil tempted our first parents with this, that if they would eat of the forbidden fruit, they should be as gods.—It was a lie in Satan's mouth; for he aimed at nothing else but to fool man out of his happiness, and make him his own slave and vassal, with a blinded expectation of being like a god.—But little did Satan think that God would turn it so, as to make man's fall an occasion of God's becoming man: and so an occasion of our nature being advanced to a state of closer union to God.

By this means it comes to pass, that one in man's nature now sits at the right hand of God, invested with divine power and glory, and reigns over heaven and earth with a god-like power and dominion. Thus is Satan disappointed in his subtilty. As he intended that saying, *Ye shall be as gods*, it was a lie, to decoy and befool man. Little did he think, that it would be in such manner verified, by the incarnation of the Son of God. And this is the occasion also of all the elect being united to this divine person, so that they become one with Christ. Believers are as members and parts of Christ. Yea the church is called Christ. Little did Satan think, that his telling that lie to our first parents, "Ye shall be as gods," would be the occasion of their being members of Christ the Son of God.

Again, Satan is made a means of his own confusion in this:—It was Satan's design, in tempting man to sin, to make man his captive and slave for ever; to have plagued, and triumphed over him. And this very thing is a means to bring it about, that man instead of being his vassal should be his judge. The elect, instead of being his captives, to be for ever tormented and triumphed over by him, shall sit as judges to sentence him to everlasting torment. It has been the means, that one in man's nature, should be his supreme judge. It was man's nature that Satan so envied, and sought to make a prey of. But Jesus Christ at the last day shall come in man's nature; and the devils shall be all brought to stand trembling at his bar: and he shall judge and condemn them, and execute the wrath of God upon them. And not only shall Christ in the human nature judge the devils, but all the saints shall judge them with Christ as assessors with him in judgment. 1 Cor. vi. 3. *Know ye not that we shall judge angels?*

Secondly. In another instance Satan is made a means of his own confusion; that is, in his procuring the death of Christ. Satan set himself to oppose Christ as soon as he appeared.—He sought, by all means, to procure his ruin. He set the Jews against him. He filled the minds of the scribes and Pharisees with the most bitter persecuting malice against Christ. He sought by all means to procure his death; and that he might be put to the most ignominious death. We read

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"that Satan entered into Judas, and tempted him to betray him." Luke xxii. 3. And Christ speaks of his sufferings as being the effects of the power of darkness, Luke xxii. 53. *When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.*—But Satan hereby overthrows his own kingdom. Christ came into the world to destroy the works of the devil. And this was the very thing that did it, *viz.* the blood and death of Christ. The cross was the devil's own weapon; and with this weapon he was overthrown: As David cut off Goliath's head with his own sword.

Christ thus making Satan a means of his own confusion was typified of old by Samson's getting honey out of the carcass of the lion. There is more implied in Samson's riddle, *Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness*, than ever the Philistines explained. It was verified by Christ in a far more glorious manner. God's enemies and ours are taken in the pit which they themselves have digged: and their own soul is taken in the net which they have laid. Thus we have shewn, in some measure, the wisdom of this way of salvation by Jesus Christ.

SECT. VIII.

The Superiority of this Wisdom to that of the Angels.

THE wisdom of this contrivance appears to have been above the wisdom of the angels by the following things.

1. It appears that the angels did not fully comprehend the contrivance, till they saw it accomplished. They knew that man was to be redeemed, long before Christ came into the world: but yet they did not fully comprehend it until they saw it. This is evident by the expression in the text. *That now might be known unto the principalities—the manifold wisdom of God*; i. e. Now the work is actually accomplished by Jesus Christ. Which implies that it was now new to them.—If they understood no more of it now, than they had all along, the apostle would never have expressed himself so; for he is speaking of it as a mystery, in a measure kept hid until now.

Now it is to be considered, that the angels had four thousand years to contemplate this affair; and they did not want inclination and desire to understand and look into it, as the scripture teaches us. They had also a great deal to put them upon an attentive contemplation of it. For when it was made known that God had such a design, it must appear a new and wonderful thing to them. They had seen their fellow-angels

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destroyed without mercy; and this redeeming of the fallen sinful creature, was quite a new thing. It must needs be astonishing to them, when God had revealed this design of mercy to them presently after the fall: and had given an intimation of it, in saying, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." They knew that God had such a design; for they were, from the beginning, ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to those that were the heirs of salvation.—They were present at the institution of the typical dispensation, that was so full of shadows of gospel truth. Psalm lxix. 17.

The angels contemplating the contrivance of our redemption was typified by the posture of the cherubims over the mercy-seat, which was the lid of the ark. These emblems were made bending down towards the ark and mercy-seat.—This is what the apostle Peter is thought to have some reference to, 1 Peter i. 12. Yet the angels, though for four thousand years they had been studying this contrivance, did not fully comprehend it till they saw it accomplished. This shews that the wisdom of it was far above theirs; for if they could not fully comprehend it after it had been revealed that there was such a design—and after much of it had already been made known in the Old Testament—how much less could they have found it out of themselves.

Consider for what end this wisdom of God was made known unto the angels, *viz.* that they might admire and prize it. It was made known to them, that they might see how manifold, how great and glorious it is; that they might see the unspeakable "depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God," as the apostle expresses it, Rom. xi. 33.——It was manifested to them that they might see the glory of God in it, and how great and wonderful the mystery was. 1 Tim. iii. 16. *Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels.* Now if the wisdom of it were not far above their own understandings, this would not be shewn them for the express purpose that they might admire and praise God for it.

2. It appears to be above the wisdom of the angels, because they are still contemplating it; and endeavouring to see more and more of it. Indeed there is room for their faculties to employ themselves to all eternity. It is evident from 1 Pet. i. 11, 12, that they are still employing themselves in endeavouring to see more and more of God's wisdom appearing in the work of redemption, *Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel*

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unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. They still desire to look into it, after they have seen it accomplished. They do not so perfectly comprehend all the wisdom that is to be seen in it; but they are contemplating, looking into it, that they may see more and more; but there will still be room enough in this work to employ the angelical understandings.

SECT. IX.

The Subject Improved.

I. HENCE we may learn the blindness of the world, that the wisdom appearing in the work of redemption is no more admired in it. God has revealed this his glorious design and contrivance to the world; sends forth his gospel, and causes it to be preached abroad, in order to declare to the world that his infinite wisdom has been engaged for man's salvation. But how little is it regarded! There are some who have their eyes opened to behold the wondrous things of the gospel, who see the glory of God in, and admire the wisdom of it. But the greater part are wholly blind to it. They see nothing in all this that is any way glorious and wonderful. Though the angels account it worthy of their most engaged and deep contemplation; yet the greater part of men take little notice of it. It is all a dull story, and dead letter to many of them. They cannot see any thing in it above the wisdom of men. Yea, the gospel to many seems foolishness.

Though the light that shines in the world be so exceeding glorious, yet how few are there that do see it. The glory of God's wisdom in this work is surpassing the brightness of the sun: but so blind is the world that it sees nothing. It does not know that the Sun of righteousness shines. Thus it has been in all ages, and wherever the gospel has been preached; ministers of the word of God in all ages have had occasion to say, Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Thus the prophets were sent to many with that errand, Isa. vi. 9, 10. *Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not: and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.*

When Christ that glorious prophet came, and more fully revealed the counsels of God concerning our redemption, how many were then blind! how much did Christ complain of them! How blind were the scribes and Pharisees, the most noted sect of men among the Jews for wisdom; they beheld no

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glory in that gospel which Christ preached unto them; which gave him occasion to call them fools and blind, Matt. xxiii. 17.—So it was again in the apostles' times. In all places where they preached, some believed, and some believed not, Acts xxviii. 24. *As many as were ordained to eternal life believed*, chap. xiii. 48. *The election obtained it, but the rest were blinded*, Rom. xi. 7. And so it is still in those places where the gospel is preached. There are a few who see the glory of the gospel. God has a small number whose eyes he opens, who are called out of darkness into marvellous light, and who have an understanding to see the wisdom and fitness of the way of life. But how many are there who sit under the preaching of the gospel all their days, and yet never see any divine wisdom or glory in it! To their dying day they are unaffected with it. When they hear it, they see nothing to attract their attention, much less excite any admiration. To preach the gospel to them will serve very well to lull them asleep; but produces very little other effect upon them. This shews the exceeding wickedness of the heart of man. How affecting the thought, that infinite wisdom should be set on work, so as to surprise the angels, and to entertain them from age to age;—and that to men, though so plainly set before them, it should appear foolishness! 1 Cor. i. 18. *The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness.*

II. This is a great confirmation of the truth of the gospel. The gospel stands in no need of external evidences of its truth and divinity. It carries its own light and evidence with it.—There is that in its nature that sufficiently distinguishes it, to those who are spiritually enlightened, from all the effects of human invention. There are evident appearances of the divine perfections; the stamp of divine glory, of which this of the divine wisdom is not the least part.

There is as much in the gospel to shew that it is no work of men, as there is in the sun in the firmament. As persons of mature reason who look upon the sun, and consider the nature of it, its wonderful height, its course, its brightness and heat, may know that it is no work of man; so, if the gospel be duly considered, if the true nature of it be seen, it may be known that it is no work of man, and that it must be from God. And if the *wisdom* appearing in the gospel be duly considered, it will be seen as much to excel all human wisdom, as the sun's light excels the light of fires of our own kindling.—The contrivance of our salvation is of such a nature that no one can rationally conclude that man had any hand in it. The nature of the contrivance is such, so out of the way of all human thoughts, so different from all human inventions; so much more sublime, excellent and worthy, that it does

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not savour at all of the craft or subtilty of man; it savours of God only.

If any are ready to think man might have found out such a way of salvation for sinners—so honourable to God, to his holiness and authority—they do not well consider the scantiness of human understanding. Mankind were of a poor capacity for any such undertaking; for, till the gospel enlightened the world, they had but miserable notions of what was honourable to God. They could have but poor notions of what way would be suitable to the divine perfections; for they were woefully in the dark about these divine perfections themselves, till the gospel came abroad in the world. They had strange notions about a Deity. Most of them thought there were many gods. *They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things*, Rom. i. 23. They attributed vices to God. Even the philosophers, their wisest men, entertained but imperfect notions of the supreme Being. How then should men find out a way so glorious and honourable to God, and agreeable to his perfections, who had not wisdom enough to get any tolerable notions of God, till the gospel was revealed to them. They groped in the dark. Their notions showed the infinite insufficiency of man's blind understanding for any such undertaking, as the contriving of a way of salvation every way honourable to God, and suitable to the needs of a fallen creature.

But since the gospel has told what God's counsels are, and how he has contrived a way for our salvation, men are ready to despise it, and foolishly to exalt their own understanding; and to imagine they could have found out as good a way themselves. When, alas! men, of themselves, had no notion of what was honourable to God, and suitable for a divine Being. They did not so much as think of the necessity of God's law being answered, and justice satisfied. And if they had, how dreadfully would they have been puzzled, to have found out the way how! Who would have thought of a trinity of persons in the godhead; and that one should sustain the rights of the godhead; and another should be the Mediator; and another should make application of redemption! Who would have thought of such a thing as three distinct persons, and yet but one God! All the same Being, and yet three persons! Who would have thought of this, in order to have found out a way for satisfying justice! Who would have thought of a way for answering the law that threatened eternal death, without the sinner's suffering eternal death! And who would have thought of any such thing as a divine person *suffering the wrath of God!* And if they had; who

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would have contrived a way *how* he should suffer, since the divine nature cannot suffer!

Who would have thought of any such thing as God becoming man; two natures and but one person! These things are exceedingly out of the way of human thought and contrivance. It is most unreasonable to think that the world, who, till the gospel enlightened them, were so blind about the nature of God and divine things, shoud contrive such a way that should prove thus to answer all ends; every way to suit what the case required; most glorious to God, and answerable to all man's necessities. Every thing is so fully provided for, and no absurdity to be found in the whole affair, but all speaking forth the most perfect wisdom. That there should be no infringement upon holiness or justice; nothing dishonourable to the majesty of God; no encouragement to sin, all possible motives to holiness: all manner of happiness provided; and Satan so confounded and entirely overthrown, how truly wonderful!

And if we suppose that all this notwithstanding was the invention of men, whose invention should it be? Who should be pitched upon as the most likely to invent it? It was not the invention of the Jews; for they were the most bitter enemies to it. The wise men among them, when they first heard of it, conceived malice against it, and persecuted all that held this doctrine. It was not the invention of the Heathen; for they knew nothing about it till the apostles preached it to them; and it appeared a very foolish doctrine to the wise men among them. The doctrine of Christ crucified was not only to the Jews a stumbling-block, but also to the Greeks foolishness, 1 Cor. i. 23. Besides, it was contrary to all their notions about a Deity, and they knew nothing about the fall of man, and the like, till the gospel revealed it to them.

It was not the invention of the apostles; for the apostles, of themselves, were no way capable of any such learned contrivance. They were poor fishermen and publicans, an obscure and illiterate sort of men, till they were extraordinarily taught. They were all surprised when they first heard of it. When they heard that Christ must die for sinners, they were offended at it: and it was a long while before they were brought fully to receive it.

There is but one way left; and that is, to suppose that Christ was a mere man, a very subtile crafty man, and that he invented it all: but this is as unreasonable as the rest; for it would have been all against himself, to invent a way of salvation by his own crucifixion, a most tormenting and ignominious death.

III. How great a sin they are guilty of who despise and reject this way of salvation! When God has manifested such

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unsearchable riches of wisdom; when all the persons of the Trinity have as it were held a consultation from all eternity in providing a way of salvation for us sinful miserable worms;—a way that should be sufficient and every way suitable for us;—a way that should be in all things complete, whereby we might have not only full pardon of all our sins, and deliverance from hell; but also full blessedness in heaven for ever:—how must God needs be provoked, when after all, men reject this way of salvation!

When salvation comes to be preached, and is offered to them in this way; when they are invited to accept of its benefits, and yet they despise and refuse it, they thus practically deny it to be a wise way, and call this wisdom of God foolishness.—How provoking must it be, when such a poor creature as man shall rise up, and find fault with that wisdom which is so far above the wisdom of angels! This is one thing wherein consists the heinousness of the sin of unbelief, that it implies a rejecting and depising of divine wisdom in the way of salvation by Jesus Christ.—Unbelief finds fault with the wisdom of God in the choice of the person, for performing this work. It dislikes the person of Christ. It sees no form nor comeliness in him, nor beauty wherefore it should desire him,

That person whom the wisdom of God looked upon as the fittest person of any, the *only* fit person, is despised and rejected by unbelief.—Men, through unbelief, find fault with the salvation itself that Christ has purchased: they do not like to be saved as Christ would save. They do not like to be made holy, and to have such a happiness as is to be had in God for a portion.

It may not be amiss here to mention two or three ways whereby persons are guilty of a provoking contempt of the wisdom of God in the way of salvation.

1. They are guilty of a provoking contempt, who live in a *careless neglect* of their salvation; they who are secure in their sins, and are not much concerned about either salvation or damnation. This is practically charging God with folly.—Its language is, that all is in vain, and to no purpose; that God hath contrived and consulted for our salvation, when there was no need of it. They are well enough as they are. They do not see any great necessity of a Saviour. They like that state they are in, and do not much desire to be delivered out of it. They do not thank him for all his consultation and contrivance, and think he might have spared his cost. God has greatly minded that which they do not think worth minding; and has contrived abundantly for that which they do not trouble their heads about.

2. They are guilty of a provoking contempt of the wisdom of this way of salvation, who go about to *contrive*

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ways of their own. They who are not content with salvation by the righteousness of Christ, which God has provided, are for contriving some way of being saved by their own righteousness. These find fault with the wisdom of God's way, and set up their own wisdom in opposition to it. How greatly must God be provoked by such conduct.

3. Those that entertain discouraged and *despairing apprehensions* about their salvation, cast contempt on the wisdom of God. They think that because they have been such great sinners, God will not be willing to pardon them; Christ will not be willing to accept of them. They fear that Christ, in the invitations of the gospel, does not mean such wicked creatures as they are; that because they have committed so much sin, they have sinned beyond the reach of mercy. They think it is in vain for them to seek for salvation. These cast contempt on the wisdom of God in the way of salvation, as though it were not all-sufficient:—as though the wisdom of God had not found out a way that was sufficient for the salvation of great sinners.

SECT. X.

The Misery of Unbelievers.

UNBELIEVERS have no portion in this matter. There is a most glorious way of salvation, but you, who are unbelievers, have no interest in it. The wisdom of God hath been gloriously employed for the deliverance of men from a miserable, doleful state; but you are never the better for it, because you reject it. If you continue in that state, this wisdom will do you no good.

Christ is a glorious person; every way fit to be a Saviour of sinners; a person who has power sufficient, wisdom sufficient, merit sufficient, and love sufficient for perfecting this work. And he is the *only* fit person: but you have no right in him; you can lay claim to no benefit by his power, wisdom, love, or merits.—This wisdom of God hath found out a way whereby this Saviour might satisfy justice, and fulfil the law for us; a way whereby he might be capable of suffering for us; but you have no lot in the incarnation, death, and sufferings of Jesus Christ.

The wisdom of God hath contrived a way of salvation that there should be procured for us perfect and everlasting happiness. Here is that happiness procured which is most suitable to our nature, and answerable to the salvation of our souls. Here is a most glorious portion, *viz.* the Divine Being himself, with his glorious perfections. Here it is purchased,

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that we should see God face to face;—that we should converse and dwell with God in his own glorious habitation;—that we should be the children of God, and be conformed to him. Here are the highest honours, the most abundant riches, the most substantial satisfying pleasures for evermore. Here we have prepared all needed good, both for the souls and bodies of sinners; all needed earthly good things, while here; and glory, for both body and soul hereafter, for ever.

But you are never the better for all this. You have no lot, nor portion in any of it. Notwithstanding all this rich provision, you remain in the same miserable state and condition, in which you came into the world. Though the provision of the gospel be so full, yet your poor soul remains in a famishing, perishing state. You remain dead in trespasses and sins; under the dominion of Satan; in a condemned state, having the wrath of God abiding on you, and being daily exposed to the dreadful effects of it in hell. Notwithstanding all this provision, you remain wretched and miserable, poor and blind and naked. O that you might turn to God through Jesus Christ, be numbered among his disciples and faithful followers, and so be intitled to their privileges! They have an interest in this glorious Saviour, and are intitled to all the ineffable blessedness of his kingdom, so far as their capacities will admit; but you remain without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenant of promise, having no well-grounded hope, and without God in the world. Further consider a few things.

First. It argues the *great misery* of sinners, that the wisdom of God should be exercised to such a degree in order to find out a way to deliver them from it. Their case surely was most deplorable, since it required infinite wisdom to find out a way for their deliverance. The wisdom of angels was not sufficient: nothing but divine wisdom could reach and remedy their case. And all the persons of the Trinity did enter into a consultation about it. If man's misery were not very great, divine wisdom would not have been exercised for his deliverance from it. God would not contrive and do things so wonderful in a trivial affair. If the salvation of a sinner were not a great salvation, from an exceeding great misery, it is not to be supposed, that God's wisdom should be more signalized in this affair than in any other whatever.

But so it is; this contrivance seems to be spoken of in scripture as the master-piece of divine wisdom. This work of redemption is represented as most wonderful, and spoken of in scripture in the most exalted manner of any work of God.—Doubtless therefore salvation is a great thing; and consequently the misery that sinners are saved from, is a great and unspeakable misery. Now this is the misery that you are all

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in, who remain in a natural condition. This is the condemnation you lie under. This is the wrath of God that abides upon you. The wisdom of God knew it to be a very doleful thing for a person to be in a natural state, and therefore did so exercise itself to deliver miserable sinners out of it. But this is the state that many among us do yet remain in.

Secondly. Consider, that if you continue in the state you are in, you will be so far from being the better for this contrivance, that you will be much *more miserable* for it. The justice and wisdom of the way of salvation will be your condemnation. *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light*. John iii. 19. If you continue in that state you are now in, it would have been better for you, if Christ had never died for sinners; if God had left all mankind to perish, as he did the fallen angels. Your punishment then would have been light in comparison of what it will be now. You will have greater sins by far to answer for; and all your sins will be abundantly the more aggravated.

Since I have been upon this subject, I have observed, that the work of redemption is an occasion of the elect being brought to greater happiness than man could have had, if he had not fallen. And it is also true as to reprobates, that it will be an occasion of their having greater misery than they would have had, if there had been no redemption. 2 Cor. ii. 15. *For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved and in them that perish. To the one we are a savour of death unto death; and to the other we are a savour of life unto life*. If you perish at last, you will be the more miserable for the benefits of the gospel being so glorious, and that because your crime in rejecting and despising them will be the more heinous. Heb. ii. 3. *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?*

Thirdly. Whilst you continue an unbeliever, *the more you hear* of this way of salvation, your condition will become the more miserable. The longer you sit under the preaching of the gospel, the more doleful does your case grow. Your guilt continually increases. For your refusals of the gospel, and your rejections of this way of salvation, are so much the oftener repeated. Every time you hear the gospel preached, you are guilty of a renewed rejection of it, the guilt of which therefore you will have lying upon you. And the more you hear of the suitableness and glory of this way, the greater is your guilt who still continue to reject it. Every new illustration of the wisdom and grace of God in redemption, adds to your guilt. Matt. xxiii. 37. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem—how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not!*——

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What adds to your misery is, that as long as it continues, it is a growing evil.

Fourthly. Consider the danger there is, that you will never have any lot or portion in this matter; seeing there are but few that have. Christ has told us that straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. There have been but few in all ages of the world. Many seek; and many hope that they shall obtain. There are but few that intend to be damned; while many hope that they shall some way or other find means to escape eternal misery. But after all, there are but few saved; or obtain the benefits of redemption.

SECT. XI.

Exhortation to come to Christ.

I CONCLUDE with an use of Exhortation to come to Christ, and accept of salvation in this way. You are invited to come to Christ, heartily to close with him, and trust in him for salvation: and if you do so, you shall have the benefit of this glorious contrivance. You shall have the benefit of all; as much as if the whole had been contrived for you alone. God has already contrived every thing that is needful for your salvation; and there is nothing wanting but your consent. Since God has taken this matter of the redemption of sinners into his own hand, he has made thorough work of it; he has not left it for you to finish. Satisfaction is already made, righteousness is already wrought out: death and hell are already conquered. The Redeemer has already taken possession of glory, and keeps it in his hands to bestow on them who come to him. There were many difficulties in the way, but they are all removed. The Saviour has already triumphed over all, and is at the right hand of God, to give eternal life to his people.

Salvation is ready brought to your door; and the Saviour stands, knocks, and calls that you would open to him, that he might bring it in to you. There remains nothing but your consent. All the difficulty now remaining is with your own heart. If you perish now, it must be wholly at your door. It must be because you would not come to Christ that you might have life; and because you virtually choose death rather than life. Prov. viii. 36. *He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.*—All that is now required of you, is, that your heart should close with Christ as a Saviour. Here consider,

1. That the wisdom of God hath so contrived, that he

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hath forestalled all your *objections*. If you make objections against Christ and the way of salvation, they must be all unreasonable. You cannot reasonably object that your sins are of such a nature, that God's honour will not allow of your pardon. It is true God insists upon his own honour. He is a God that will be honoured, and his majesty shall be vindicated: and when sinners cast contempt upon him, his honour requires vengeance. But God has so contrived this way, that his honour may be repaired by the punishment of sin without the sinners suffering, how great soever the sin be. Herein the wisdom of this way appears, that there is a sufficiency for the greatest and most heinous transgressors.

You cannot object that God the father will not be willing to accept you, for the Mediator's sake; for he hath chosen his own Son to be a Mediator, to cut off any such objections. So you may be sure that God will receive you if you go to him through Christ.—You cannot object that God the father has not given sufficient assurance of salvation to believers; for the principal things, those which would have been most difficult to believe, are already fulfilled: God hath already given his Son to die for us. This, before it was accomplished, was much more strange, and difficult to believe, than that he should give eternal life to sinners after Christ died for them. Rom. viii. 32. *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?*

There is no room to doubt but that if we accept of Christ, God will give eternal life; for he hath given it already into the hands of our Saviour for us. He hath intrusted him with the whole affair. He hath given all things into his hands, that he might give eternal life to as many as should come to him. The Father hath appointed him who died for believers, to be their judge, to have the whole determination of the matter, and the disposal of the reward, in his own hand. And you cannot doubt but that Christ will be willing to bestow eternal life on them for whom he purchased it. For if he is not willing to bestow it, surely he never would have died to purchase it. Who can think that Christ would be so desirous of sinners being saved, as to undergo so much for it; and not be willing to let them have it, when he had obtained it for them.—Consider,

2. The wisdom of God hath contrived that there should be in the *person* of the Saviour all manner of attractives to draw us to him. He has in him all possible excellency. He is possessed of all the beauty and glory of the Godhead.—So that there can be no manner of excellency, nor degree of excellency, that we can devise, but what is in the person of the Saviour.—But yet so redundant has the wisdom of God been, in providing attractives in order that we should come to Christ, it hath so

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ordered that there should also be all human excellencies in him. If there be any thing attractive in this consideration, that Christ is one in our own nature, one of us; this is true of Christ. He is not only in the divine, but in the human nature. He is truly a man, and has all possible human excellencies. He was of a most excellent spirit; wise and holy, condescending and meek, and of a lowly, benign and benevolent disposition.

Again: The wisdom of God hath chosen a person of great love to sinners, and who should shew that love in the most endearing manner possible. What more *condescending* love can there be, than the love of a divine person to such worms of the dust! What *freer* love can there be, than love to enemies! What *greater* love can there be, than dying love! And what more endearing *expression* of love, than dying for the beloved! And the wisdom of God hath so contrived, that Christ shall sustain that office which should most tend to endear him to us, and draw us to him: the office of a Redeemer, a redeemer from eternal misery, and the purchaser of all happiness.

And if all this be not enough to draw us, the wisdom of God hath ordered more; it hath provided us a Saviour that should offer himself to us in the most endearing relation. He offers to receive us as friends; to receive us to an union to himself, to become our spiritual husband and portion for ever.—And the wisdom of God hath provided us a Saviour that woos in a manner that has the greatest tendency to win our hearts. His word is most attractive. He stands at our door and knocks. He does not merely command us to receive him: but he condescends to apply himself to us in a more endearing manner. He intreats and beseeches us in his word and by his messengers.

3. The wisdom of God hath contrived that there should be all manner of attractives in the *benefits* that Christ offers you. There are not only the excellencies of the person of Christ to draw you to him, but the desirable benefits he offers. Here is what is most suitable to the cravings of the human nature. Men when distressed and burdened, long for ease and *rest:* here it is offered to us in Christ. *Come unto me*, says he, *all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*—Men when in fear of danger, long for *safety:* here it is provided for us in Christ. God promises that he will become a shield and buckler, a strong rock and high tower to those that trust in him.—Those that mourn need *comfort:* Christ tells us that *he came to comfort those that mourn*, Isa. lxi. 2.—The blind need to have their eyes opened. The light is sweet to men: Christ offers to anoint our eyes with eye-salve that we may see glorious light. He will be our sun, and the light of God's countenance.—What is more dear to men than *life?* Christ

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hath purchased for men, that they should live for ever. Psal. xxi. 4. *He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever.*—How greatly is a crown prized and admired by the children of men? And Christ offers this;—not a corruptible crown, but an incorruptible and far more glorious crown, than any worn by earthly kings: a crown of glory, the lustre of which shall never fade, nor decay; with an everlasting kingdom.—Do men love *pleasures?* Here are pleasures for evermore. What could there be more to draw our hearts to Jesus Christ, and to make us willing to accept of him for our Saviour, with all his unspeakable benefits!

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CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE:

OR, THE

IMPORTANCE AND ADVANTAGE

OF A

THOROUGH KNOWLEDGE

OF

DIVINE TRUTH.

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CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,

&c. &c.

HEBREWS V. 12.

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

THESE words are a complaint, which the apostle makes against the Christian Hebrews, for their want of such proficiency in the knowledge of the doctrines and mysteries of religion, as might have been expected of them. The apostle complains, that they had not made that progress in their acquaintance with the things taught in the oracles of God, which they ought to have made. And he means to reprove them, not merely for their deficiency in *spiritual* and *experimental* knowledge of divine things, but for their deficiency in a *doctrinal* acquaintance with the principles of religion, and the truths of Christian divinity; as is evident by the manner in which the apostle introduces this reproof. The occasion of his introducing it is this: In the next verse but one preceding, he mentions Christ as being "called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedec." In the Old Testament, the oracles of God, Melchizedec was held forth as an eminent type of Christ; and the account we there have of him contains many gospel mysteries. These mysteries the apostle was willing to point out to the Christian Hebrews; but he apprehended, that through their weakness in knowledge, they would not understand him; and therefore breaks off for the present from saying any thing about Melchizedec, thus, (ver. 11.) "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered; seeing ye are all dull of hearing;" *i. e.* there are

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many things concerning Melchizedec which contain wonderful gospel mysteries, and which I would take notice of to you, were it not that I am afraid, that through your dulness, and backwardness in understanding these things, you would only be puzzled and confounded by my discourse, and so receive no benefit; and that it would be too hard for you, as meat that is too strong.

Then come in the words of the text: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as need of milk, and not of strong meat." As much as to say, Indeed it might have been expected of you, that you should have known enough of the holy scriptures, to be able to understand and digest such mysteries: but it is not so with you. The apostle speaks of their proficiency in such knowledge as is conveyed by *human* teaching: as appears by that expression, "When for the time ye ought to be teachers;" which includes not only a practical and experimental, but also a *doctrinal knowledge* of the truths and mysteries of religion.

Again, the apostle speaks of such knowledge, whereby Christians are enabled to understand things in divinity which are more abstruse and difficult to be understood, and which require great skill in things of this nature. This is more fully expressed in the two next verses: "For every one that useth milk, is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." It is such knowledge, that proficiency in it shall carry persons beyond the first principles of religion. As here; "Ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God." Therefore the apostle, in the beginning of the next chapter, advises them, "to leave the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and to go on unto perfection."

We may observe that the fault of this defect appears, in that they had not made *proficiency* according to their time.—For the time, they ought to have been teachers. As they were Christians, their business was to learn and gain Christian knowledge. They were scholars in the school of Christ; and if they had improved their time in learning, as they ought to have done, they might, by the time when the apostle wrote, have been fit to be teachers in this school. To whatever business any one is devoted, it may be expected that his perfection in it shall be answerable to the time he has had to learn and perfect himself.—Christians should not always remain babes, but should grow in Christian knowledge;

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and leaving the food of babes, they should learn to digest strong meat.

DOCTRINE. Every Christian should make a business of endeavouring to grow in knowledge in divinity.—This is indeed esteemed the business of divines and ministers: it is commonly thought to be their work, by the study of the scriptures, and other instructive books, to gain knowledge; and most seem to think that it may be left to them, as what belongeth not to others. But if the apostle had entertained this notion, he would never have blamed the Christian Hebrews for not having acquired knowledge enough to be teachers. Or if he had thought, that this concerned Christians in general only as a thing by the bye, and that their time should not in a considerable measure be taken up with this business; he never would have so much blamed them, that their proficiency in knowledge had not been answerable to the time which they had had to learn.

In handling this subject, I shall shew—what is intended by *divinity*—what kind of *knowledge* in divinity is intended—*why* knowledge in divinity is *necessary*.

And why all Christians should make a business of endeavouring to *grow* in this knowledge.

SECT. I.

What is intended by Divinity, as the Object of Christian Knowledge.

VARIOUS definitions have been given of this subject by those who have treated on it. I shall not now stand to inquire which, according to the rules of art, is the most accurate definition; but shall so define or describe it, as I think has the greatest tendency to convey a proper notion of it. It is that science or doctrine which comprehends all those truths and rules which concern the great business of religion.

There are various kinds of arts and sciences taught and learned in the schools, which are conversant about various objects; about the works of nature in general, as philosophy; or the visible heavens, as astronomy; or the sea, as navigation; or the earth, as geography; or the body of man, as physic and anatomy; or the soul of man, with regard to its natural powers and qualities, as logic and pneumatology; or about human government, as politics and jurisprudence. But one science, or kind of knowledge and doctrine, is above all the rest; as it treats concerning God and the great business of religion. *Divinity* is not learned, as other sciences, merely

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by the improvement of man's natural reason, but is taught by God himself in a book full of instruction, which he hath given us for that end. This is the rule which God hath given to the world to be their guide in searching after this kind of knowledge, and is a summary of all things of this nature needful for us to know. Upon this account divinity is rather called a doctrine, than an art or science.

Indeed there is what is called *natural religion*. There are many truths concerning God, and our duty to him, which are evident by the light of nature. But *Christian divinity*, properly so called, is not evident by the light of nature; it depends on revelation. Such are our circumstances now in our fallen state, that nothing which it is needful for us to know concerning God, is manifest by the light of nature, in the manner in which it is necessary for us to know it. For the knowledge of no truth in divinity is of significance to us, any otherwise than as it some way or other belongs to the gospel scheme, or as it relates to a Mediator. But the light of nature teaches us no truth in this matter. Therefore it cannot be said, that we come to the knowledge of any part of Christian truth by the light of nature. It is only the word of God, contained in the Old and New Testament, which teaches us Christian divinity.

This comprehends all that is taught in the scriptures, and so all that we need know, or is to be known, concerning God and Jesus Christ, concerning our duty to God, and our happiness in God. Divinity is commonly defined, *the doctrine of living to God:* and by some who seem to be more accurate, *the doctrine of living to God by Christ*. It comprehends all Christian doctrines as they are in Jesus, and all Christian rules directing us in living to God by Christ. There is no one doctrine, no promise, no rule, but what some way or other relates to the Christian and divine life, or our living to God by Christ. They all relate to this, in two respects, *viz.* as they tend to promote our living to God here in this world, in a life of faith and holiness, and also as they tend to bring us to a life of perfect holiness and happiness, in the full enjoyment of God hereafter.

SECT. II.

What Kind of Knowledge in Divinity, is intended in the Doctrine.

There are two kinds of knowledge of divine truth, *viz. speculative* and *practical*, or in other terms, *natural* and *spiritual*. The former remains only in the head. No other

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faculty but the understanding is concerned in it. It consists in having a natural or rational knowledge of the things of religion, or such a knowledge as is to be obtained by the natural exercise of our own faculties, without any special illumination of the Spirit of God. The latter rests not entirely in the head, or in the speculative ideas of things; but the heart is concerned in it: it principally consists in the sense of the heart. The mere intellect, without the will or the inclination, is not the seat of it. And it may not only be called seeing, but feeling or tasting. Thus there is a difference between having a right speculative notion of the doctrines contained in the word of God, and having a due sense of them in the heart. In the former consists the speculative or natural knowledge; in the latter consists the spiritual or practical knowledge of them.

Neither of these is intended in the doctrine exclusively of the other: but it is intended that we should seek the former *in order* to the latter. The latter, or the spiritual and practical, is of the greatest importance; for a speculative without a spiritual knowledge, is to no purpose, but to make our condemnation the greater. Yet a speculative knowledge is also of infinite importance in this respect, that without it we can have no spiritual or practical knowledge.

I have already shewn, that the apostle speaks not only of a spiritual knowledge, but of such as can be acquired, and communicated from one to another. Yet it is not to be thought, that he means this exclusively of the other. But he would have the Christian Hebrews seek the one, in order to the other. Therefore the former is first and most *directly* intended; it is intended that Christians should, by reading and other proper means, seek a good *rational knowledge* of the things of divinity: while the latter is more *indirectly* intended, since it is to be sought by the other. But I proceed to

SECT. III.

The Usefulness and Necessity of the Knowledge of Divine Truths.

THERE is no other way by which any means of grace whatsoever can be of any benefit, but by knowledge. All teaching is in vain, without learning. Therefore the preaching of the gospel would be wholly to no purpose, if it conveyed no knowledge to the mind. There is an order of men which Christ has appointed on purpose to be teachers in his church. But they teach in vain, if no knowledge in these things is gained by their teaching. It is impossible that their teaching

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and preaching should be a mean of grace, or of any good in the hearts of their hearers, any otherwise than by knowledge imparted to the understanding. Otherwise it would be of as much benefit to the auditory, if the minister should preach in some unknown tongue. All the difference is, that preaching in a known tongue conveys something to the understanding, which preaching in an unknown tongue does not. On this account, such preaching must be unprofitable. In such things men receive nothing, when they understand nothing; and are not at all edified, unless some knowledge be conveyed; agreeable to the apostle's arguing, 1 Cor. xiv. 2—6.

No speech can be a mean of grace, but by conveying knowledge. Otherwise the speech is as much lost as if there had been no man there, and if he that spoke, had spoken only into the air; as it follows in the passage just quoted, ver. 6—10. God deals with man as with a rational creature; and when faith is in exercise, it is not about something he knows not what. Therefore hearing is absolutely necessary to faith; because hearing is necessary to understanding. Rom. x. 14. "How they shall believe in him of whom they have not heard?" In like manner, there can be no love without knowledge. It is not according to the nature of the human soul, to love an object which is entirely unknown. The heart cannot be set upon an object of which there is no idea in the understanding. The reasons which induce the soul to love, must first be understood, before they can have a reasonable influence on the heart.

God hath given us the Bible, which is a book of instructions. But this book can be of no manner of profit to us, any otherwise than as it conveys some knowledge to the mind: it can profit us no more than if it were written in the Chinese or Tartarian language, of which we know not one word. So the sacraments of the gospel can have a proper effect no other way, than by conveying some knowledge. They represent certain things by visible signs. And what is the end of signs, but to convey some knowledge of the things signified? Such is the nature of man, that no object can come at the heart but through the door of the understanding: and there can be no spiritual knowledge of that of which there is not first a rational knowledge. It is impossible that any one should see the truth or excellency of any doctrine of the gospel, who knows not what that doctrine is. A man cannot see the wonderful excellency and love of Christ in doing such and such things for sinners, unless his understanding be first informed how those things were done. He cannot have a taste of the sweetness and excellency of divine truth, unless he first have a notion that there is such a thing.

Without knowledge in divinity, none would differ from

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the most ignorant and barbarous Heathens. The Heathens remain in gross darkness, because they are not instructed, and have not obtained the knowledge of divine truths.

If men have no knowledge of these things, the faculty of reason in them will be wholly in vain. The faculty of reason and understanding was given for *actual* understanding and knowledge. If a man have no actual knowledge, the faculty or capacity of knowing is of no use to him. And if he have actual knowledge, yet if he be destitute of the knowledge of those things which are the last end of his being, and for the sake of the knowledge of which he had more understanding given him than the beasts; then still his faculty of reason is in vain; he might as well have been a beast as a man. But divine subjects are the things, to know which we had the faculty of reason given us. They are the things which appertain to the end of our being, and to the great business for which we are made. Therefore a man cannot have his faculty of understanding to any good purpose, further than he hath knowledge of divine truth.

So that this kind of knowledge is absolutely necessary.—Other kinds of knowledge may be very useful. Some other sciences, such as astronomy, natural philosophy, and geography, may be very excellent in their kind. But the knowledge of this divine science is infinitely more useful and important than that of all other sciences whatever.

SECT. IV.

Why all Christians should make a Business of endeavouring to grow in the Knowledge of Divinity.

CHRISTIANS ought not to content themselves with such degrees of knowledge of divinity as they have already obtained. It should not satisfy them, as they know as much as is absolutely necessary to salvation, but they should seek to make progress.

This endeavour to make progress in such knowledge ought not to be attended to as a thing by the bye, but all Christians should make a *business* of it. They should look upon it as a part of their *daily* business, and no small part of it neither. It should be attended to as a considerable part of the work of their high calling.—For,

1. Our business should doubtless much consist in employing those faculties, by which we are distinguished from the beasts, about those things which are the main end of those faculties. The reason why we have faculties superior to those of the brutes given us, is, that we are indeed designed for a

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superior employment. That which the Creator intended should be our main employment, is something above what he intended the beast for, and therefore hath given us superior powers. Therefore, without doubt, it should be a considerable part of our business to improve those superior faculties. But the faculty by which we are chiefly distinguished from the brutes, is the faculty of understanding. It follows then, that we should make it our chief business to improve this faculty, and should by no means prosecute it as a business by the bye. For us to make the improvement of this faculty a business by the bye, is in effect for us to make the faculty of understanding itself a *by-faculty*, if I may so speak, a faculty of less importance than others: whereas indeed it is the highest faculty we have.

But we cannot make a business of the improvement of our intellectual faculty, any otherwise than by making a business of improving ourselves in actual knowledge. So that those who make not this very much their business; but instead of improving their understanding to acquire knowledge, are chiefly devoted to their inferior power—to please their senses, and gratify their animal appetites—not only behave themselves in a manner not becoming Christians, but also act as if they had forgotten that they are men, and that God hath set them above the brutes, by giving them understanding.

God hath given to man some things in common with the brutes, as his outward senses, his bodily appetites, a capacity of bodily pleasure and pain, and other animal faculties: and some things he hath given him superior to the brutes, the chief of which is a faculty of understanding and reason. Now God never gave man these faculties to be subject to those which he hath in common with the brutes. This would be great confusion, and equivalent to making man to be a servant to the beasts. On the contrary, he has given those inferior powers to be employed in subserviency to man's understanding; and therefore it must be a great part of man's principal business to improve his understanding by acquiring knowledge. If so, then it will follow, that it should be a main part of his business to improve his understanding in acquiring *divine* knowledge, or the knowledge of the things of divinity: for the knowledge of these things is the principal end of this faculty. God gave man the faculty of understanding, chiefly, that he might understand divine things.

The wiser Heathens were sensible that the main business of man was the improvement and exercise of his understanding. But they knew not the object about which the understanding should chiefly be employed. That science which many of them thought should chiefly employ the understanding, was philosophy; and accordingly they made it their chief business

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to study it. But we who enjoy the light of the gospel are more happy; we are not left, as to this particular, in the dark. God hath told us about what things we should chiefly employ our understandings, having given us a book full of divine instructions, holding forth many glorious objects about which all rational creatures should chiefly employ their understandings. These instructions are accommodated to persons of all capacities and conditions, and proper to be studied, not only by men of learning, but by persons of every character, learned and unlearned, young and old, men and women. Therefore the acquisition of knowledge in these things should be a main business of all those who have the advantage of enjoying the Holy Scriptures.

2. The truths of divinity are of superlative excellency, and are worthy that all should make a business of endeavouring to grow in the knowledge of them. They are as much above those things which are treated of in other sciences, as heaven is above the earth. God himself, the eternal Three in One, is the chief object of this science; and next Jesus Christ, as God-man and Mediator, and the glorious work of redemption, the most glorious work that ever was wrought: then the great things of the heavenly world, the glorious and eternal inheritance purchased by Christ, and promised in the gospel; the work of the Holy Spirit of God on the hearts of men; our duty to God, and the way in which we ourselves may become like angels, and like God himself in our measure. All these are objects of this science.

Such things as these have been the main subject of the study of the holy patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and the most excellent men that ever existed; and they are also the subject of study to the angels in heaven; 1 Pet. i. 10—12.—They are so excellent and worthy to be known, that the knowledge of them will richly pay for all the pains and labour of an earnest seeking of it. If there were a great treasure of gold and pearls accidentally found, and opened with such circumstances that all might have as much as they could gather; would not every one think it worth his while to make a business of gathering while it should last? But that treasure of divine knowledge, which is contained in the Scriptures, and is provided for every one to gather to himself as much of it as he can, is far more rich than any one of gold and pearls. How busy are all sorts of men, all over the world, in getting riches? But this knowledge is a far better kind of riches, than that after which they so diligently and laboriously pursue.

3. Divine truths not only concern ministers, but are of infinite importance to all Christians. It is not with the doctrines of divinity as it is with the doctrines of philosophy and other sciences. These last are generally speculative points,

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which are of little concern in human life; and it very little alters the case as to our temporal or spiritual interests, whether we know them or not. Philosophers differ about them, some being of one opinion, and others of another. And while they are engaged in warm disputes about them, others may well leave them to dispute among themselves, without troubling their heads much about them; it being of little concern to them whether the one or the other be in the right.—But it is not thus in matters of divinity. The doctrines of this nearly concern every one. They are about those things which relate to every man's eternal salvation and happiness. The common people cannot say, Let us leave these matters to ministers and divines; let them dispute them out among themselves as they can; they concern not us: For they are of infinite importance to every man. Those doctines which relate to the essence, attributes, and subsistencies of God, concern all; as it is of infinite importance to common people, as well as to ministers, to know what kind of being God is. For he is the Being who hath made us all, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being;" who is the Lord of all; the Being to whom we are all accountable; is the last end of our being, and the only fountain of our happiness.

The doctrines also which relate to Jesus Christ and his mediation, his incarnation, his life and death, his resurrection and ascension, his sitting at the right hand of the Father, his satisfaction and intercession, infinitely concern common people as well as divines. They stand in as much need of this Saviour, and of an interest in his person and offices, and the things which he hath done and suffered, as ministers and divines.—The same may be said of the doctrines which relate to the manner of a sinner's justification, or the way in which he becomes interested in the mediation of Christ. They equally concern all; for all stand in equal necessity of justification before God. That eternal condemnation, to which we are all natually exposed, is equally dreadful. So with respect to those doctrines which relate to the work of the Spirit of God on the heart, in the application of redemption in our effectual calling and sanctification, all are equally concerned in them. There is no doctrine of divinity whatever, which doth not some way or other concern the eternal interest of every Christian.

4. We may argue in favour of the same position, from the great things which God hath done in order to give us instruction in these things. As to other sciences, he hath left us to ourselves, to the light of our own reason. But divine things being of infinitely greater importance to us, he hath not left us to an uncertain guide; but hath himself given us a revelation of the truth in these matters, and hath done very great

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things to convey and confirm it to us; raising up many prophets in different ages, immediately inspiring them with his Holy Spirit, and confirming their doctrine with innumerable miracles or wonderful works out of the established course of nature. Yea, he raised up a succession of prophets, which was upheld for several ages.

It was very much for this end that God separated the people of Israel, in so wonderful a manner, from all other people, and kept them separate; that to them he might commit the oracles of God, and that from them they might be communicated to the world. He hath also often sent angels to bring divine instructions to men; and hath often himself appeared in miraculous symbols or representations of his presence: and now in these last days hath sent his own Son into the world, to be his great prophet, to teach us divine truth, Heb. i. 1, &c. God hath given us a book of divine instructions, which contains the sum of divinity. Now, these things hath God done, not only for the instruction of ministers and men of learning; but for the instruction of all men, of all sorts, learned and unlearned, men, women, and children. And certainly if God doth such great things to *teach* us, we ought to do something to *learn*.

God giving instructions to men in these things, is not a business by the bye; but what he hath undertaken and prosecuted in a course of great and wonderful dispensations, as an affair in which his heart hath been greatly engaged; which is sometimes in Scripture signified by the expression of God's rising early to teach us, and to send us prophets and teachers. Jer. vii. 25. "Since that day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt, unto this day, I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early, and sending them." And ver. 13. "I spake unto you, rising up early, and speaking." This is a figurative speech, signifying, that God hath done this as a business of great importance, in which he took great care, and had his heart much engaged; because persons are wont to rise early to prosecute such business as they are earnestly engaged in.—If God hath been so engaged in teaching, certainly we should not be negligent in learning; but should make growing in knowledge a great part of the business of our lives.

5. It may be argued from the abundance of the instructions which God hath given us, from the largeness of that book which God hath given to teach us divinity, and from the great variety that is therein contained. Much was taught by Moses of old, which we have transmitted down to us; after that, other books were from time to time added; much is taught us by David and Solomon; and many and excellent are the instructions communicated by the prophets; Yet God did not

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think all this enough, but after this sent Christ and his apostles, by whom there is added a great and excellent treasure to that holy book, which is to be our rule in the study of this important subject.

This book was written for the use of all; all are directed to search the scriptures, John v. 39. "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they that testify of me;" and Isa. xxxiv. 16. "Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read." They that read and understand are pronounced blessed, Rev. i. 3. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that understand the words of this prophecy." If this be true of that particular book of the *Revelation*, much more is it true of the Bible in general. Nor is it to be believed that God would have given instructions in such abundance, if he had intended that receiving instruction should be only a bye concern with us.

It is to be considered, that all those abundant instructions which are contained in the scriptures were written that they might be understood; otherwise they are not instructions. That which is not given that the learner may understand it, is not given for the learner's instruction; and unless we endeavour to grow in the knowledge of divinity, a very great part of those instructions will to us be in vain; for we can receive benefit by no more of the scriptures than we understand. We have reason to bless God that he hath given us such various and plentiful instruction in his word; but we shall be hypocritical in so doing, if we after all content ourselves with but little of this instruction.

When God hath opened a very large treasure before us, for the supply of our wants, and we thank him that he hath given us so much; if at the same time we be willing to remain destitute of the greatest part of it, because we are too lazy to gather it, this will not shew the sincerity of our thankfulness. We are now under much greater advantages to acquire knowledge in divinity, than the people of God were of old, because since that time the canon of scripture is much increased. But if we be negligent of our advantages, we may be never the better for them, and may remain with as little knowledge as they.

6. However diligently we apply ourselves, there is room enough to increase our knowledge in divine truth. None have this excuse to make for not diligently applying themselves to gain knowledge in divinity, that they already know all; nor can they make this excuse, that they have no need diligently to apply themselves, in order to know all that is to be known. None can excuse themselves for want of business in which to employ themselves. There is room enough to employ ourselves for ever in this divine science, with the utmost appli-

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cation. Those who have applied themselves most closely, have studied the longest, and have made the greatest attainments in this knowledge, know but little of what is to be known. The subject is inexhaustible. That Divine Being, who is the main subject of this science, is infinite, and there is no end to the glory of his perfections. His works at the same time are wonderful, and cannot be found out to perfection; especially the work of redemption, about which the science of divinity is chiefly conversant, is full of unsearchable wonders.

The word of God, which is given for our instruction in divinity, contains enough in it to employ us to the end of our lives, and then we shall leave enough uninvestigated to employ the heads of the ablest divines to the end of the world. The Psalmist found an end to the things that are human; but he could never find an end to what is contained in the word of God: Psal. cxix. 96. "I have seen an end to all perfection; but thy command is exceeding broad." There is enough in this divine science to employ the understandings of saints and angels to all eternity.

7. It doubtless concerns every one to endeavour to excel in the knowledge of things which pertain to his profession, or principal calling. If it concerns men to excel in any thing, or in any wisdom or knowledge at all, it certainly concerns them to excel in the affairs of their main profession and work. But the calling and work of every Christian is to live to God. This is said to be his *high calling*, Phil. iii. 14. This is the business, and, if I may so speak, the *trade* of a Christian, his main work, and indeed should be his only work. No business should be done by a Christian, but as it is some way or other a part of this. Therefore certainly the Christian should endeavour to be well acquainted with those things which belong to this work, that he may fulfil it, and be thoroughly furnished to it.

It becomes one who is called to be a soldier, to excel in the art of war. It becomes a mariner to excel in the art of navigation. It becomes a physician to excel in the knowledge of those things which pertain to the art of physic. So it becomes all such as profess to be Christians, and to devote themselves to the practice of Christianity, to endeavour to excel in the knowledge of divinity.

8. It may be argued hence, that God hath appointed an order of men for this end, to assist persons in gaining knowledge in these things. He hath appointed them to be teachers, 1 Cor. xii. 28; and God hath set some in the church; first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers: Eph. iv. 11, 12. "He gave some, apostles; some, prophets; some, evangelists; some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the

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saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." If God hath set them to be teachers, making that their business, then he hath made it their business to impart knowledge. But what kind of knowledge? not the knowledge of philosophy, or of human laws, or of mechanical arts, but of divinity.

If God have made it the business of some to be teachers, it will follow, that he hath made it the business of others to be learners; for teachers and learners are correlates, one of which was never intended to be without the other. God hath never made it the duty of some to take pains to teach those who are not obliged to take pains to learn. He hath not commanded ministers to spend themselves, in order to impart knowledge to those who are not obliged to apply themselves to receive it.

The name by which Christians are commonly called in the New Testament is *disciples*, the signification of which word is *scholars* or *learners*. All Christians are put into the school of Christ, where their business is to learn, or receive knowledge from Christ, their common master and teacher, and from those inferior teachers appointed by him to instruct in his name.

9. God hath in the scriptures plainly revealed it to be his will, that all Christians should diligently endeavour to excel in the knowledge of divine things. It is the revealed will of God, that Christians should not only have some knowledge of things of this nature, but that they should be *enriched with all knowledge*: 1 Cor. i. 4, 5. "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God that is given you by Jesus Christ, that in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in *all knowledge*." So the apostle earnestly prayed, that the Christian Philippians might abound more and more, not only in love, but in Christian *knowledge*; Phil. i. 9. "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in *knowledge*, and in *all judgment*." So the apostle Peter advises to "give all diligence to add to faith virtue, and to virtue *knowledge*," 2 Pet. i. 5; and the apostle Paul, in the next chapter to that wherein is the text, counsels the Christian Hebrews' leaving the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, to go on to perfection. He would by no means have them always to rest only in those fundamental doctrines of repentance, and faith, and the resurrection from the dead, and the eternal judgment, in which they were instructed when baptized, at their first initiation in Christianity. (See Heb. vi. &c.)

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SECT. V.

An Exhortation that all may diligently endeavour to gain Christian Knowledge.

CONSIDER yourselves as scholars or disciples, put into the school of Christ; and therefore be diligent to make proficiency in Christian knowledge. Content not yourselves with this, that you have been taught your catechism in your childhood, and that you know as much of the principles of religion as is necessary to salvation; else you will be guilty of what the apostle warns against, *viz.* going no further than laying the foundation of repentance from dead works, &c.

You are all called to be Christians, and this is your profession. Endeavour, therefore, to acquire knowledge in things which pertain to your profession. Let not your teachers have cause to complain, that while they spend and are spent, to impart knowledge to you, you take little pains to learn. It is a great encouragement to an instructor, to have such to teach as make a business of learning, bending their minds to it. This makes teaching a pleasure, when otherwise it will be a very heavy and burdensome task.

You all have by you a large treasure of divine knowledge, in that you have the Bible in your hands; therefore be not contented in possessing but little of this treasure. God hath spoken much to you in the scriptures; labour to understand as much of what he saith as you can. God hath made you all reasonable creatures; therefore let not the noble faculty of reason or understanding lie neglected. Content not yourselves with having so much knowledge as is thrown in your way, and received in some sense unavoidably by the frequent inculcation of divine truth in the preaching of the word, of which you are obliged to be hearers, or accidentally gain in conversation; but let it be very much your business to search for it, and that with the same diligence and labour with which men are wont to dig in mines of silver and gold.

Especially I would advise those who are young to employ themselves in this way. Men are never too old to learn; but the time of youth is especially the time for learning; it is peculiarly proper for gaining and storing up knowledge.—— Further, to stir up all, both old and young, to this duty, let me entreat you to consider,

1. If you apply yourselves diligently to this work, you will not want employment, when you are at leisure from your common secular business. In this way, you may find something in which you may profitably employ yourselves. You

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will find something else to do, besides going about from house to house, spending one hour after another in unprofitable conversation, or, at best, to no other purpose but to amuse yourselves, to fill up and wear away your time. And it is to be feared that very much of the time spent in evening visits, is spent to a much worse purpose than that which I have now mentioned. Solomon tells us, Prov. x. 19, "That in the multitude of words, there wanteth not sin." And is not this verified in those who find little else to do but to go to one another's houses, and spend the time in such talk as comes next, or such as any one's present disposition happens to suggest?

Some diversion is doubtless lawful; but for Christians to spend so much of their time, so many long evenings, in no other conversation than that which tends to divert and amuse, if nothing worse, is a sinful way of spending time, and tends to poverty of soul at least, if not to outward poverty: Prov. xiv. 23. "In all labour there is profit; but the talk of the lips tendeth only to *penury*." Besides, when persons for so much of their time have nothing else to do, but to sit, and talk, and chat, there is great danger of falling into foolish and sinful conversation, venting their corrupt dispositions, in talking against others, expressing their jealousies and evil surmises concerning their neighbours; not considering what Christ hath said, Matt. xii. 36. "Of every idle word that men shall speak, shall they give account in the day of judgment."

If you would comply with what you have heard from this doctrine, you would find something else to employ your time besides contention, or talking about those public affairs which tend to contention. Young people might find something else to do, besides spending their time in vain company; something that would be much more profitable to themselves, as it would really turn to some good account; something in doing which they would both be more out of the way of temptation, and be more in the way of duty, and of a divine blessing. And even aged people would have something to employ themselves in, after they are become incapable of bodily labour. Their time, as is now often the case, would not lie heavy upon their hands, as they would with both profit and pleasure be engaged in searching the scriptures, and in comparing and meditating upon the various truths which they should find there.

2. This would be a *noble* way of spending your time.—The Holy Spirit gives the Bereans this epithet, because they diligently employed themselves in this business: Acts, xvii. 11. "These were more *noble* than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and

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searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Similar to this is very much the employment of heaven. The inhabitants of that world spend much of their time in searching into the great things of divinity, and endeavouring to acquire knowledge in them, as we are told of the angels, 1 Pet. i. 12. "Which things the angels desire to look into." This will be very agreeable to what you hope will be your business to all eternity, as you doubtless hope to join in the same employment with the angels of light. Solomon says, Prov. xxv. 2, "It is the honour of kings to search out a matter;" and certainly, above all others, to search out divine matters. Now, if this be the honour even of kings, is it not equally, if not much more your honour?

3. This is a *pleasant* way of improving time. Knowledge is pleasant and delightful to intelligent creatures, and above all the knowledge of divine things; for in them are the most excellent truths, and the most beautiful and amiable objects held forth to view. However tedious the labour necessarily attending this business may be, yet the knowledge once obtained will richly requite the pains taken to obtain it. "When wisdom entereth the heart, knowledge is pleasant to the soul." Prov. ii. 10.

4. This knowledge is exceeding *useful* in Christian practice. Such as have much knowledge in divinity have great means and advantages for spiritual and saving knowledge; for no means of grace have a saving effect, otherwise than by the knowledge they impart. The more you have of a rational knowledge of divine things, the more opportunity will there be, when the Spirit shall be breathed into your heart, to see the excellency of these things, and to taste the sweetness of them. The Heathens, who have no rational knowledge of the things of the gospel, have no opportunity to see the excellency of them; and therefore the more rational knowledge of these things you have, the more opportunity and advantage you have to see the divine excellency and glory of them.

Again, The more knowledge you have of divine things, the better will you know your duty; your knowledge will be of great use to direct you as to your duty in particular cases. You will also be the better furnished against the temptations of the devil. For the devil also takes advantage of persons' ignorance to ply them with temptations which otherwise would have no hold of them. By having much knowledge, you will be under greater advantages to conduct yourselves with prudence and discretion in your Christian course, and so to live much more to the honour of God and religion. Many who mean well, and are full of a good spirit, yet for want of prudence, conduct themselves so as to wound religion. Many

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have a zeal of God, which does more hurt than good, because it is not according to knowledge, Rom. x. 2. The reason why many good men behave no better in many instances, is not so much that they want grace, as that they want knowledge. Beside, an increase of knowledge would be a great help to profitable conversation. It would supply you with matter for conversation when you come together, or when you visit your neighbours: and so you would have less temptation to spend the time in such conversation as tends to your own and others' hurt.

5. Consider the advantages you are under to grow in the knowledge of divinity. We are under far greater advantages to gain much of this knowledge now, than God's people under the Old Testament, both because the canon of scripture is so much enlarged since that time, and also because evangelical truths are now so much more plainly revealed. So that common men are now in some respects under advantages to know more, than the greatest prophets were then. Thus that saying of Christ is in a sense applicable to us, Luke x. 23, 24, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things which ye see. For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." We are in some respects under far greater advantages for gaining knowledge, now in these latter ages of the church, than Christians were formerly; especially by reason of the art of printing, of which God hath given us the benefit, whereby Bibles and other books of divinity are exceedingly multiplied, and persons may now be furnished with helps for the obtaining of Christian knowledge, at a much easier and cheaper rate than they formerly could.

6. We know not what opposition we may meet with in the religious principles which we hold. We know that there are many adversaries to the gospel and its truths. If therefore we embrace those truths, we must expect to be attacked by the said adversaries; and unless we be well informed concerning divine things, how shall we be able to defend ourselves? Beside, the apostle Peter enjoins it upon us, always to be ready to give an answer to every man who asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us. But this we cannot expect to do without considerable knowledge in divine things.

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SECT. VI.

Directions for the Acquisition of Christian Knowledge.

1. Be assiduous in reading the holy scriptures. This is the fountain whence all knowledge in divinity must be derived. Therefore let not this treasure lie by you neglected. Every man of common understanding who can read, may, if he please, become well acquainted with the scriptures. And what an excellent attainment would this be!

2. Content not yourselves with only a cursory reading, without regarding the sense. This is an ill way of reading, to which, however, many accustom themselves all their days. When you read, observe what you read. Observe how things come in. Take notice of the drift of the discourse, and compare one scripture with another. For the scripture, by the harmony of its different parts, casts great light upon itself.—We are expressly directed by Christ, to *search* the scriptures, which evidently intends something more than a mere cursory reading. And use means to find out the meaning of the scripture. When you have it explained in the preaching of the word, take notice of it; and if at any time a scripture that you did not understand be cleared up to your satisfaction, mark it, lay it up, and if possible remember it.

3. Procure, and diligently use other books which may help you to grow in this knowledge. There are many excellent books extant, which might greatly forward you in this knowledge, and afford you a very profitable and pleasant entertainment in your leisure hours. There is doubtless a great defect in many, that through a loathness to be at a little expence, they furnish themselves with no more helps of this nature. They have a few books indeed, which now and then on Sabbath-days they read; but they have had them so long, and read them so often, that they are weary of them, and it is now become a dull story, a mere task to read them.

4. Improve conversation with others to this end. How much might persons promote each other's knowledge in divine things, if they would improve conversation as they might; if men that are ignorant were not ashamed to shew their ignorance, and were willing to learn of others; if those that have knowledge would communicate it, without pride and ostentation; and if all were more disposed to enter on such conversation as would be for their mutual edification and instruction.

5. Seek not to grow in knowledge chiefly for the sake of applause, and to enable you to dispute with others; but

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seek it for the benefit of your souls, and in order to practice.—If applause be your end, you will not be so likely to be led to the knowledge of the truth, but may justly, as often is the case of those who are proud of their knowledge, be led into error to your own perdition. This being your end, if you should obtain much rational knowledge, it would not be likely to be of any benefit to you, but would puff you up with pride: 1 Cor. viii. 1. "Knowledge puffeth up."

6. Seek to God, that he would direct you, and bless you, in this pursuit after knowledge. This is the apostle's direction, Jam. i. 5. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not." God is the fountain of all divine knowledge: Prov. ii. 6. "The Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." Labour to be sensible of your own blindness and ignorance, and your need of the help of God, lest you be led into error, instead of true knowledge: 1 Cor. iii. 18. "If any man would be wise, let him become a fool, that he may be wise."

7. Practise according to what knowledge you have. This will be the way to know more. The Psalmist warmly recommends this way of seeking knowledge in divine truth, from his own experience: Psal. cxix. 100. "I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts." Christ also recommends the same: John vii. 17. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

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CHRISTIAN CHARITY:

OR,

THE DUTY

OF

CHARITY TO THE POOR,

EXPLAINED AND ENFORCED.

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CHRISTIAN CHARITY,

&c. &c.

DEUT. XV. 7—12.

If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren, within any of thy gates, in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand: and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought, and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.

SECT. I.

The Words explained.

THE duty here enjoined is giving to the poor: "If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother:—Thou shalt surely give him." Here by *thy poor brother* is to be understood the same as in other places is meant by *neighbour*. It is explained in Levit. xxv. 35, to mean not only those of their own nation, but even strangers and sojourners: "And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in

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decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a *stranger*, or a *sojourner*." The Pharisees indeed interpreted it to signify only one of their own nation; but Christ condemns this interpretation, Luke x. 29, &c. and teaches, in contradiction to their opinion, that the rules of charity, in the law of Moses, are to be extended to the Samaritans, who were not of their nation, and between whom and the Jews there was the most bitter enmity, and who were a people very troublesome to the Jews.

God gives us direction *how* we are to give in such a case, viz. *bountifully*, and *willingly*. We should give *bountifully*, and *sufficiently* for the supply of the poor's need: verse 7, 8. "Thou shall not shut up thine hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth." And again, in verse 11. "Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land." Again, we should give *willingly*, and *without grudging*: verse 7. "Thou shalt not harden thine heart from thy poor brother;" and verse 10. "And thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest him."

We may also observe how peremptorily this duty is here enjoined, and how much it is insisted on. It is repeated over and over again, and enjoined in the strongest terms: verse 7, "Thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother;" verse 8. "But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him;" verse 10. "Thou shalt surely give him;" verse 11. "I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother; to thy poor, and to thy needy."

Moreover, God strictly warns against objections, verse 9, "Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, "The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand: and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought, and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee." The matter concerning the seventh year, or year of release, was thus: God had given Israel a law, that every seventh year should be a year of release; that if any man had lent any thing to any of his poor neighbours, if the latter had not been able to repay it before that year, the former should release it, and should not exact it of his neighbour, but give it to him. Therefore God warns the children of Israel against making of this an objection to helping their poor neighbours, that the year of release was near at hand; and it was not likely that they would be able to refund it again before that time, and then they should lose it wholly, because then they would be obliged to release it. God foresaw that the wickedness of their hearts would be ready to make such an objection; but

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very strictly warns them against it, that they should not be the more backward to supply the wants of the needy for that, but should be willing to give him: "Thou shalt be willing to lend, expecting nothing again."

Men are exceedingly apt to make objections against such duties, which God speaks of here as a manifestation of the wickedness of their hearts: "Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart," &c. The warning is very strict. God doth not only say, Beware that thou do not actually refuse to give him: but, Beware that thou have not one objecting thought against it, arising from a backwardness to liberality. God warns against the beginnings of uncharitableness in the heart, and against whatever tends to a forbearance to give: "And thou give him nought, and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee." God warns them, from the guilt which they would be liable to bring upon themselves hereby.

We may observe here several *enforcements* of this duty. There is a reason of this duty implied in God's calling him that is needy, *our brother*: "Thou shalt not shut thine hand from thy poor *brother*;" and verse 9. "Beware that thine eye be not evil against thy poor *brother*;" and verse 11. "Thou shalt open thine hand wide to thy *brother*." We are to look upon ourselves as related to all mankind, but especially to those who are of the visible people of God. We are to look upon them as brethren, and to treat them accordingly. We shall be base indeed, if we be not willing to help a *brother* in want.—Another enforcement of this duty is the *promise* of God, that for this thing he will bless us in all our works, and in all that we put our hands unto; a promise that we shall not lose, but gain by it, (verse 10.)—Another is, that we shall never want proper objects of our charity and bounty: verse 11. "For the poor shall never cease out of thy land." This God saith to the Jewish church; and the like Christ saith to the Christian church, Matt. xxvi. 11. "The poor ye have always with you." This is to cut off an excuse that uncharitable persons would be ready to make for not giving, that they could find no body to give to, that they saw none who needed. God cuts off such an excuse, by telling us, that he would so order it in his providence, that his people every where, and in all ages, shall have occasion for the exercise of that virtue.

From this account the doctrine is obvious, that it is the absolute and indispensable duty of the people of God, to give bountifully and willingly for supplying the wants of the needy.—But more particularly,

1. It is the duty of the people of God, to give *bountifully* for the aforesaid purpose. It is commanded once and again in the text, "Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy poor

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brother." Merely to give something is not sufficient; it answers not the rule, nor comes up to the holy command of God; but we must open our hand wide. What we give, considering our neighbour's wants, and our ability, should be such as may be called a *liberal* gift. What is meant in the text by opening the hand wide, with respect to those that are able, is explained in ver. 8. "Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his want, in that which he needeth." By lending here, as is evident by the two following verses, and as we have just now shewn, is not only meant lending to receive again; the word *lend* in scripture is sometimes used for giving; as in Luke vi. 35. "Do good and lend, hoping for nothing again."

We are commanded, therefore, to give our poor neighbour what is sufficient for his need. There ought to be none suffered to live in pinching want, among a visible people of God, who are able; unless in case of idleness, or prodigality, or some such case which the word of God excepts.—It is said that the children of Israel should lend to the poor, and in the year of release should release what they had lent, *save when there should be no poor among them*. It is rendered in the margin, *to the end there be no poor among you;* i. e. you should so supply the wants of the needy, that there may be none among you in pinching want. This translation seems the more likely to be the true one, because God says, ver. 11, that there shall be no such time when there shall be no poor, who shall be proper objects of charity.—When persons give very *sparingly*, it is no manifestation of charity, but of a contrary spirit: 2 Cor. ix. 5. "Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness." The apostle here calls a very sparing contribution, matter of covetousness.

2. It is the duty of the visible people of God, to give for the supply of the needy, *freely*, and without grudging. It doth not at all answer the rule in the sight of God, if it be done with an inward grudging, or if the heart be grieved, and it inwardly hurt the man to give what he gives: "Thou shalt surely give," says God, "and thine heart shall not be grieved." God looks at the heart, and the hand is not accepted without it: 2 Cor. ix. 7. "Every man according as he hath purposed in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver."

3. This is a duty to which God's people are under very strict *obligations*. It is not merely a commendable thing for

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a man to be kind and bountiful to the poor, but our bounden duty, as much a duty as it is to pray, or to attend public worship, or any thing else whatever; and the neglect of it brings great guilt upon any person.

SECT. II.

Of the Obligation of Christians to perform the Duty of Charity to the Poor.

THIS duty is absolutely commanded, and much insisted on in the word of God. Where have we any command in the Bible laid down in stronger terms, and in a more peremptory urgent manner, than the command of giving to the poor? We have the same law in a positive manner laid down in Levit. xxv. 35, &c. "And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him; yea, though he be a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with thee." And at the conclusion of ver. 38, God enforces it with saying, *I am the Lord thy God.*

It is mentioned in scripture, not only as a duty, but a great duty. Indeed it is generally acknowledged to be a duty to be kind to the needy; but by many it seems not to be looked upon as a duty of great importance. However, it is mentioned in scripture as one of the greater and more essential duties of religion: Micah vi. 8. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, *to love mercy*, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Here *to love mercy* is mentioned as one of the three great things that are the sum of all religion. So it is mentioned by the apostle James, as one of the two things wherein pure and undefiled religion consists: James i. 27. "Pure religion, and undefiled, before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

So Christ tells us, it is one of the weightier matters of the law: Matth. xxii. 23. "Ye have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith." The scriptures again and again teach us, that it is a more weighty and essential thing than the attendance on the outward ordinances of worship: Hos. vi. 6. "I desired mercy, and not sacrifice;" Matth. ix. 13, and xii. 7. I know of scarce any duty which is so much insisted on, so pressed and urged upon us, both in the Old Testament and New, as this duty of charity to the poor.

The reason of the thing strongly obliges to it. It is not only very positively and frequently insisted on by God, but it

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is most reasonable in itself; and so, on this account, there is reason why God should much insist upon it.

1. It is most reasonable, considering the general state and nature of mankind. This is such as renders it most reasonable that we should love our neighbour as ourselves; for men are made in the image of our God, and on this account are worthy of our love. Besides, we are all nearly allied one to another by nature. We have all the same nature, like faculties, like dispositions, like desires of good, like needs, like aversion to misery, and are made of one blood; and we are made to subsist by society and union one with another. God hath made us with such a nature, that we cannot subsist without the help of one another. Mankind in this respect are as the members of the natural body; one cannot subsist alone, without an union with, and the help of the rest.

Now, this state of mankind shews how reasonable and suitable it is, that men should love their neighbours; and that we should not look every one at his own things, but every man also at the things of others, Phil. ii. 4. A selfish spirit is very unsuitable to the nature and state of mankind. He who is all for himself, and none for his neighbours, deserves to be cut off from the benefit of human society, and to be turned out among wild beasts, to subsist by himself as well as he can. A private niggardly spirit is more suitable for wolves, and other beasts of prey, than for human beings.

To love our neighbours as ourselves, is the sum of the moral law respecting our fellow-creatures; and to help them, and to contribute to their relief, is the most natural expression of this love. It is vain to pretend to a spirit of love to our neighbours, when it is grievous to us to part with any thing for their help, when under calamity. They who love only in word, and in tongue, and not in deed, have no love in truth. Any profession without it is a vain pretence. To refuse to give to the needy, is unreasonable, because we therein do to others contrary to what we would have others to do to us in like circumstances. We are very sensible of our own calamities; and when we suffer, are ready enough to think that our state requires the compassion and help of others; and are ready enough to think it hard, if others will not deny themselves in order to help us when in straits.

2. It is especially reasonable, considering our circumstances, under such a dispensation of grace as that of the gospel. Consider how much God hath done for us, how greatly he hath loved us, what he hath given us, when we were so unworthy, and when he could have no addition to his happiness by us. Consider that silver and gold, and earthly crowns, were in his esteem but mean things to give us, and he

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hath therefore given us his own Son. Christ loved and pitied us, when we were poor, and he laid out himself to help, and even did shed his own blood for us without grudging. He did not think much to deny himself, and to be at great cost for us vile wretches, in order to make us rich, and to clothe us with kingly robes, when we were naked; to feast us at his own table with dainties infinitely costly, when we were starving; to advance us from the dunghill, and set us among princes, and make us to inherit the throne of his glory, and so to give us the enjoyment of the greatest wealth and plenty to all eternity; agreeably to 2 Cor. viii. 9. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." Considering all these things, what a poor business will it be, that those who hope to share these benefits, yet cannot give something for the relief of a poor neighbour without grudging! that it should grieve them to part with a small matter, to help a fellow-servant in calamity, when Christ did not grudge to shed his own blood for them!

How unsuitable is it for us, who live only by kindness, to be unkind! What would have become of us, if Christ had been so saving of his blood, and loth to bestow it, as many men are of their money or goods? or if he had been as ready to excuse himself from dying for us, as men commonly are to excuse themselves from charity to their neighbour? If Christ would have made objections of such things, as men commonly object to performing deeds of charity to their neighbour, he would have found enough of them.

Besides, Christ, by his redemption, has brought us into a more near relation one to another, hath made us children of God, children in the same family. We are all brethren, having God for our common Father; which is much more than to be brethren in any other family. He hath made us all one body; therefore we ought to be united, and subserve one another's good, and bear one another's burdens, as is the case with the members of the same natural body. If one of the members suffer, all the other members bear the burden with it, 1 Cor. xii. 26. If one member be diseased or wounded, the other members of the body will minister to it, and help it. So surely it should be in the body of Christ: Gal. vi. 2. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

Apply these things to yourselves; and inquire, whether you do not lie under guilt on account of the neglect of this duty, in withholding that charity which God requires of you towards the needy? You have often been put upon examining yourselves, whether you do not live in some way displeasing to God. Perhaps at such times it never came into your minds, whether you did not lie under guilt on this account.—But

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this neglect certainly brings guilt upon the soul in the sight of God, as is evident by the text: "Beware that thine eye be not evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought, and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee," ver. 9. This is often mentioned as one of the sins of Judah and Jerusalem, for which God was about to bring such terrible judgments upon them; and it was one of the sins of Sodom, for which that city was destroyed, that she did not give to supply the poor and needy, Ezek. xvi. 49. "This was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness in her, and in her daughters; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy."

And have we not reason to fear, that much guilt lies upon this land on this very account? We have a high conceit of ourselves for religion: but do not many other countries shame us? Do not the Papists shame us in this respect? So far as I can understand the tenor of the Christian religion, and the rules of the word of God, the same are in no measure in this respect answered by the general practice of most people in this land. There are many who make a high profession of religion; but do not many of them need to be informed by the apostle James, what true religion is?

Let every one examine himself, whether he do not lie under guilt in this matter. Have you not forborne to give, when you have seen your brother in want? Have you not shut up the bowels of your compassion towards him, and forborne to deny yourselves a little for his relief? Or when you have given, have you not done it grudgingly? And has it not inwardly hurt and grieved you? You have looked upon what you have given, as lost: So that what you have given, has been, as the apostle expresses it, a matter of covetousness, rather than of bounty. Have not occasions of giving been unwelcome to you? Have you not been uneasy under them? Have you not felt a considerable backwardness to give? Have you not, from a grudging, backward spirit, been apt to raise objections against giving, and to excuse yourselves? Such things as these bring guilt upon the soul, and often bring down the curse of God upon the persons in whom these things are found, as we may shew more fully hereafter.

SECT. III.

An Exhortation to the Duty of Charity to the Poor.

We are professors of Christianity, we pretend to be the followers of Jesus, and to make the gospel our rule. We have

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the Bible in our houses. Let us not behave ourselves in this particular, as if we had never seen the Bible, as if we were ignorant of Christianity, and knew not what kind of religion it is. What will it signify to pretend to be Christians, and at the same time to live in the neglect of those rules of Christianity which are mainly insisted on in it? But there are several things which I would here propose to your consideration.

I. Consider that what you have is not your own; *i. e.* you have only a subordinate right. Your goods are only lent to you of God, to be improved by you in such ways as he directs. You yourselves are not your own; 1 Cor. vi. 20. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; your body and your spirit are God's." And if you yourselves are not your own, so then neither are your possessions your own. Many of you have by covenant given up yourselves and all you have to God. You have disowned and renounced any right in yourselves or in any thing that you have, and have given to God all the absolute right; and if you be true Christians, you have done it from the heart.

Your money and your goods are not your own; they are only committed to you as stewards, to be used for him who committed them to you; 1 Pet. iv. 9, 10. "Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." A steward has no business with his master's goods, to use them any otherwise than for the benefit of his master and his family, or according to his master's direction. He hath no business to use them, as if he were the proprietor of them; he hath nothing to do with them, only as he is to use them for his master. He is to give every one of his master's family their portion of meat in due season.

But if instead of that, he hoards up his master's goods for himself, and withholds them from those of the household, so that some of the family are pinched for want of food and clothing; he is therein guilty of robbing his master and embezzling his substance. And would any householder endure such a steward? If he discovered him in such a practice, would he not take his goods out of his hands, and commit them to the care of some other steward, who should give every one of his family his portion of meat in due season? Remember that all of us must give account of our stewardship, and how we have disposed of those goods which our master has put into our hands. And if when our master comes to reckon with us, it be found, that we have denied some of his family their proper provision, while we have hoarded up for ourselves, as if we had been the proprietors of our master's goods, what account shall we give of this?

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II. God tells us, that he shall look upon what is done in charity to our neighbours in want, as done unto him; and what is denied unto them, as denied unto him. Prov. xix. 17. "He that hath pity on the poor lendeth to the Lord." God hath been pleased to make our needy neighbours his receivers. He in his infinite mercy hath so interested himself in their case, that he looks upon what is given in charity to them, as given to himself: and when we deny them what their circumstances require of us, he looks upon it that we therein rob him of his right.

Christ teaches us, that we are to look upon our fellow Christians in this case as himself, and that our giving or withholding from them, shall be taken, as if we so behaved ourselves towards him; see Matt. xxv. 40. There Christ says to the righteous on his right hand, who had supplied the wants of the needy, "In that ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." In like manner he says to the wicked who had not shewn mercy to the poor, ver. 45, "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."—Now what stronger enforcement of this duty can be conceived, or is possible, than this, that Jesus Christ looks upon our kind and bountiful, or unkind and uncharitable treatment of our needy neighbours, as such a treatment of himself?

If Christ himself were upon earth, and dwelt among us in a frail body, as he once did, and were in calamitous and needy circumstances, should we not be willing to supply him? Should we be apt to excuse ourselves from helping him? Should we not be willing to supply him so, that he might live free from distressing poverty? And if we did otherwise, should we not bring great guilt upon ourselves? And might not our conduct justly be very highly resented by God? Christ was once here in a frail body, stood in need of the charity, and was maintained by it; Luke viii. 2, 3. "And certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance." So he still, in many of his members, needs the charity of others.

III. Consider that there is an absolute necessity of our complying with the difficult duties of religion. To give to the poor in the manner and measure that the gospel prescribes, is a difficult duty; *i.e.* it is very contrary to corrupt nature, to that covetousness and selfishness of which there is so much in the wicked heart of man. Man is naturally governed only by a principle of self-love; and it is a difficult thing to corrupt nature, for men to deny themselves of their present

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interest, trusting in God to make it up to them hereafter.—But how often hath Christ told us the necessity of doing difficult duties of religion, if we will be his disciples; that we must sell all, take up our cross daily, deny ourselves, renounce our worldly profits and interests, &c. And if this duty seem hard and difficult to you, let not that be an objection with you against doing it; for you have taken up quite a wrong notion of things, if you expect to go to heaven without performing difficult duties; if you expect any other than to find the way to life a narrow way.

IV. The scripture teaches us, that this very particular duty is necessary. Particularly,

1. The scripture teaches, that God will deal with us as we deal with our fellow-creatures in this particular, and that with what measure we mete to others in this respect, God will measure to us again. This the scripture asserts both ways; it asserts that if we be of a merciful spirit, God will be merciful to us: Matt. v. 7. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Psal. xviii. 25. "With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful." On the other hand it tells us, that if we be not merciful, God will not be merciful to us, and that all our pretences to faith and a work of conversion will not avail us, to obtain mercy, unless we be merciful to them that are in want. James ii. 13—16. "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy.—What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food; and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed, and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"

2. This very thing is often mentioned in scripture, as an essential part of the character of a godly man; Ps. xxxvii. 21. "The righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth;" and again, ver. 26. "He is ever merciful, and lendeth." Ps. cxii. 5. "A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth:" and ver. 9. "He hath dispersed, and given to the poor." So Prov. xiv. 31. "He that honoureth God, hath mercy on the poor." Again, Prov. xxi. 26; and Is. lvii. 1. A *righteous* man, and a *merciful* man, are used as synonymous terms: "The *righteous* perisheth, and *merciful* men are taken away," &c.

It is mentioned in the New Testament as a thing so essential, that the contrary cannot consist with a *sincere* love to God. 1 John iii. 17—19. "But whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are

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of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him." So the apostle Paul, when he writes to the Corinthians, and proposes their contributing for the supply of the poor saints, tells them what he doth it for, *viz.* a trial of their sincerity: see 2 Cor. viii. 8. "I speak to prove the sincerity of your love."

3. Christ teaches, that judgment will be past at the great day according to men's works in this respect. This is taught us by Christ in the most particular account of the proceedings of that day, that we have in the whole Bible; see Matt. xxv. 34, &c. It is evident that Christ thus represented the proceedings and determinations of this great day, as turning upon this one point, on purpose, and on design to lead us into this notion, and to fix it in us, that a charitable spirit and practice towards our brethren is necessary to salvation.

V. Consider what abundant encouragement the word of God gives, that you shall be no losers by your charity and bounty to them who are in want. As there is scarce any duty prescribed in the word of God, which is so much insisted on as this, so there is scarce any to which there are so many promises of reward made. This virtue especially hath the promises of this life and that which is to come. If we believe the scriptures, when a man charitably gives to his neighbour in want, the giver has the greatest advantage by it, even greater than the receiver; Acts xx. 35. "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." He that gives bountifully is a happier man than he that receives bountifully; Prov. xiv. 21. "He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he."

Many persons are ready to look upon what is bestowed for charitable uses as lost. But we ought not to look upon it as lost, because it benefits those whom we ought to love as ourselves. And not only so, but it is not lost *to us*, if we give any credit to the scriptures. See the advice that *Solomon* gives in Eccl. xi. 1. "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days." By casting our bread upon the waters, Solomon means giving it to the poor, as appears by the next words, "Give a portion to seven and also to eight." Waters are sometimes put for people and multitudes.

What strange advice would this seem to many, to cast their bread upon the waters, which would seem to them like throwing it away! What more direct method to lose our bread, than to go and throw it into the sea. But the wise man tells us, No, it is not lost; you shall find it again after many days. It is not sunk, but you commit it to Providence; you commit it to the winds and waves: however it will come about to you, and you shall find it again after many days.

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Though it should be many days first, yet you shall find it at last, at a time when you most need it. He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord; and God is not one of those who will not pay again what is lent to him. If you lend any thing to God, you commit it into faithful hands. Prov. xix. 17. "He that hath pity on the poor lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again." God will not only pay you again, but he will pay you with great increase; Luke vi. 38. "Give, and it shall be given unto you;" that is, in good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over."

Men do not account that lost, that is let out to use; but what is bestowed in charity is lent to the Lord, and he repays with great increase. Isa. xxxii. 8. "The liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand." Here I would particularly observe,

1. That if you give with a spirit of true charity, you shall be rewarded in what is infinitely more valuable than what you give; even eternal riches in heaven. Matt. x. 42. "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple; verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

Giving to our needy brethren, is in scripture called laying up treasure in heaven, in bags that wax not old; Luke xii. 33. "Sell what ye have and give alms, provide for yourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, nor moth corrupteth." Men, when they have laid up their money in their chests, do not suppose that they have thrown it away; but, on the contrary, that it is laid up safe. Much less is treasure thrown away, when it is laid up in heaven. What is laid up there is much safer than what is laid up in chests or cabinets.

You cannot lay up treasure on earth, but that it is liable to be stolen, or otherwise to fail. But there no thief approacheth, nor moth corrupteth. It is committed to God's care, and he will keep it safely for you; and when you die, you shall receive it with infinite increase. Instead of a part of your earthly substance thus bestowed, you shall receive heavenly riches, on which you may live in the greatest fulness, honour, and happiness, to all eternity; and shall never be in want of any thing. After feeding with some of your bread those who cannot recompense you, you shall be rewarded at the resurrection, and eat bread in the kingdom of God. Luke xiv. 13—16. "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind; and thou shalt be blessed: for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. And when one of them that sat at meat with him, heard these things, he said

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unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God."

2. If you give to the needy, though but in the exercise of moral virtue, you will be in the way greatly to gain by it in your temporal interest. They who give in the exercise of a *gracious* charity, are in the way to be gainers both here and hereafter; and those that give in the exercise of a *moral* bounty and liberality, have many temporal promises made to them. We learn by the word of God, that they are in the way to be prospered in their outward affairs. Ordinarily such do not lose by it, but such a blessing attends their concerns, that they are paid doubly for it: Prov. xi. 24, 25. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself." And Prov. xxviii. 27. "He that giveth to the poor shall not lack."

When men give to the needy, they do as it were sow seed for a crop. When men sow their seed, they seem to throw it away; yet they do not look upon it as thrown away; because, though they expect not the same again, yet they expect much more as the fruit of it; and if it be not certain that they shall have a crop, yet they are willing to run the venture of it; for that is the ordinary way wherein men obtain increase. So it is when persons give to the poor; though the promises of gaining thereby, in our outward circumstances, perhaps are not absolute; yet it is as much the ordinary consequence of it, as increase is of sowing seed. Giving to the poor, is in this respect compared to sowing seed, in Eccl. xi. 6. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." By withholding the hand the wise man means, not giving to the poor, (see ver. 1, 2.) It intimates, that giving to the poor is as likely a way to obtain prosperity and increase, as sowing seed in a field.

The husbandman doth not look upon his seed as lost, but is glad that he has opportunity to sow it. It grieves him not that he has land to be sown, but he rejoices in it. For the like reason we should not be grieved that we find needy people to bestow our charity upon; for this is as much an opportunity to obtain increase as the other.

Some may think this is strange doctrine; and it is to be feared, that not many will so far believe it as to give to the poor with as much cheerfulness as they sow their ground. However, it is the very doctrine of the word of God, 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7, 8. "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth

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in his heart; so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound towards you; that ye always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

It is easy with God to make up to men what they give in charity. Many but little consider how their prosperity or ill success in their outward affairs depends upon Providence. There are a thousand turns of Providence, to which their affairs are liable, whereby God may either add to their outward substance, or diminish from it, a great deal more than they are ordinarily called to give to their neighbours. How easy is it with God to diminish what they possess by sickness in their families, by drought, or frost, or mildew, or vermin; by unfortunate accidents, by entanglements in their affairs, or disappointments in their business! And how easy is it with God to increase their substance, by suitable seasons, or by health and strength; by giving them fair opportunities for promoting their interest in their dealings with men; by conducting them in his providence, so that they attain their designs; and by innumerable other ways which might be mentioned! How often is it, that only one act of Providence in a man's affairs either adds to his estate, or diminishes from it, more than he would need to give to the poor in a whole year.

God hath told us, that this is the way to have his blessing attending our affairs. Thus, in the text, ver. 10. "Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shalt not be grieved when thou givest unto him; because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto;" and Prov. xxii. 9. "He that hath a bountiful eye, shall be blessed." It is a remarkable evidence how little many men realize the things of religion, whatever they pretend; how little they realize that the scripture is the word of God, or if it be, that he speaks true; that notwithstanding all the promises made in the scripture to bounty to the poor, yet they are so backward to this duty, and are so afraid to trust God with a little of their estates. Observation may confirm the same thing which the word of God teaches on this head. God, in his providence, generally smiles upon and prospers those men who are of a liberal, charitable, bountiful spirit.

6. God hath threatened to follow with his curse those who are uncharitable to the poor; as Prov. xxviii. 27. "He that giveth to the poor shall not lack; but he that hideth his eyes, shall have many a curse." It is said, *he that hideth his eyes*, because this is the way of uncharitable men; they hide their eyes from seeing the wants of their neighbour. A charitable person, whose heart disposes him to bounty and liberality,

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will be quick-sighted to discern the needs of others. They will not be at any difficulty to find out who is in want; they will see objects enough of their charity, let them go whither they will.

But, on the contrary, he that is of a niggardly spirit, so that it goes against the grain to give any thing, he will be always at a loss for objects of his charity. Such men excuse themselves with this, that they find not any one to give to. They hide their eyes, and will not see their neighbour's wants. If a particular object is presented, they will not very readily see his circumstances; they are a long while in being convinced that he is an object of charity. They hide their eyes; and it is not an easy thing to make them sensible of the necessities and distresses of their neighbour, or at least to convince them, that his necessities are such that they ought to give him any great matter.

Other men, who are of a bountiful spirit, can very easily see the objects of charity; but the uncharitable are very unapt both to see the proper objects of charity, and to see their obligations to this duty. The reason is, that they are of that sort spoken of here by the wise man, *they hide their eyes*. Men will readily see, where they are *willing* to see; but where they hate to see, they will hide their eyes.

God says, such as hides his eyes in this case shall have many a curse. Such an one is in the way to be cursed in soul and body, in both his spiritual and temporal affairs. We have shewn already, how those that are charitable to the poor are in the way of being blessed. There are so many promises of the divine blessing, that we may look upon it as much the way to be blessed in our outward concerns, as sowing seed in a field is the way to have increase. And to be close and uncharitable, is as much the way to be followed with a curse, as to be charitable is the way to be followed with a blessing. To withhold more than is meet, tends as much to poverty, as scattering tends to increase, Prov. xi. 24. Therefore, if you withhold more than is meet, you cross your own disposition, and will frustrate your own end. What you seek by withholding from your neighbour, is your own temporal interest and outward estate; but if you believe the scriptures to be the word of God, you must believe that you cannot take a more direct course to lose, to be crossed and cursed in your temporal interest, than this of withholding from your indigent neighbour.

7. Consider, that you know not what calamitous and necessitous circumstances you yourselves or your children may be in. Perhaps you are ready to bless yourselves in your hearts, as though there were no danger of your being brought into calamitous and distressing circumstances. There is at

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present no prospect of it; and you hope you shall be able to provide well for your children. But you little consider what a shifting, changing, uncertain world you live in, and how often it hath so happened, that men have been reduced from the greatest prosperity to the greatest adversity, and how often the children of the rich have been reduced to pinching want.

Agreeable to this is the advice that the wise man gives us, Eccles. xi. 1, 2. "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon earth." Thou knowest not what calamitous circumstances thou mayest be in thyself, in this changeable uncertain world. You know not what circumstances you or your children may be brought into by captivity, or other unthought-of providences. Providence governs all things. Perhaps you may trust to your own wisdom to continue your prosperity; but you cannot alter what God determines and orders in providence, as in the words immediately following the forementioned text in Ecclesiastes; "If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north; in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be;" *i. e.* you cannot alter the determinations of Providence. You may trust to your own wisdom for future prosperity; but if God have ordained adversity, it *shall come* as the clouds when full of rain, empty themselves upon the earth; so what is in the womb of Providence shall surely come to pass. And as Providence casts the tree, whether towards the south, or towards the north, whether for prosperity or adversity, there it shall be, for all that you can do to alter it; agreeably to what the wise man observes in chap. vii. 13. "Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight which he hath made crooked?"

This consideration, that you know not what calamity and necessity you may be in yourselves or your children, tends very powerfully to enforce this duty several ways.

1. This may put you upon considering how your hearts would be affected, if it should so be. If it should happen, that you or some of your children should be brought into such circumstances, as those of your neighbours, how grievous would it be to you! Now perhaps you say of this and the other poor neighbour, that they can do well enough: if they be pinched a little, they can live. Thus you can make light of their difficulties. But if Providence should so order it, that you or your children should be brought into the same circumstances, would you make light of them then? Would you not use another sort of language about it? Would you not think that your case was such as needed the kindness of your

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neighbours? Would you not think that they ought to be ready to help you? And would you not take it hardly, if you saw a contrary spirit in them, and saw that they made light of your difficulties?

If one of your children should be brought to poverty by captivity,* or otherwise, how would your hearts be affected in such a case? If you should hear that some persons had taken pity on your child, and had been very bountiful to it, would you not think that they did well? Would you be at all apt to accuse them of folly or profuseness, that they should give so much to it?

2. If ever there should be such a time, your kindness to others now will be but a laying up against such a time. If you yourselves should be brought into calamity and necessity, then would you find what you have given in charity to others, lying ready in store for you. Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days, says the wise man. But when shall we find it? He tells us in the next verse; "Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth." Then is the time when you shall find it, when the day of evil cometh. You shall again find your bread which you have cast upon the waters, when you shall want it most, and stand in greatest necessity of it. God will keep it for you against such a time. When other bread shall fail, then God will bring to you the bread which you formerly cast upon the waters; so that you shall not famish. He that giveth to the poor shall not lack.

Giving to the needy is like laying up against winter, or against a time of calamity. It is the best way of laying up for yourselves and for your children. Children in a time of need very often find their father's bread, that bread which their fathers had cast upon the waters. Psalm xxxvii. 25. "I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Why? what is the reason of it? It follows in the next verse, "He is ever merciful and lendeth, and his seed is blessed."

Whether the time will ever come or not, that we or our children shall be in distressing want of bread; yet doubtless evil will be on the earth. We shall have our times of calamity, wherein we shall stand in great need of God's pity and help, if not of that of our fellow-creatures. And God hath promised that at such a time, he that hath been of a charitable spirit and practice, shall find help, Psalm xli. 1—4. "Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of

* The author repeatedly brings in this idea, doubtless because *Northampton*, the place where the author lived, was at that time a frontier-town, and suffered much by the incursions of the Indians from Canada, who slaughtered and captivated the people, as they found opportunity.

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trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed upon the earth; and thou will not deliver him into the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness." Such as have been merciful and liberal to others in their distress, God will not forget, but will so order it, that they shall have help when they are in distress. Yea, their children shall reap the fruit of it in the day of trouble.

3. God hath threatened uncharitable persons, that if ever they come to be in calamity and distress, they shall be left helpless; Prov. xxi. 3. "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he shall cry himself and not be heard."

SECT. IV.

Objections which are sometimes made to the Exercise of Charity, answered.

I PROCEED now to answer some OBJECTIONS, which are sometimes made against this duty.

OBJECT. I. I am in a natural condition, and if I should give to the poor, I should not do it with a right spirit, and so should get nothing by it.—To this I answer:

1. We have shewn already that a temporal blessing is promised to a moral bounty and liberality. This is the way to be prospered; this is the way to increase. We find in scripture many promises of temporal blessings to moral virtues; as to diligence in our business, to justice in our dealings, to faithfulness, to temperance. So there are many blessings promised to bounty and liberality.

2. You may as well make the same objection against any other duty of religion. You may as well object against keeping the sabbath, against prayer, or public worship, or against doing any thing at all in religion: for while in a natural condition, you do not any of these duties with a right spirit. If you say, you do these duties because God hath commanded or required them of you, and you shall sin greatly if you neglect them; you shall increase your guilt; and so expose yourselves to the greater damnation and punishment. The same may be said of the neglect of this duty; the neglect of it is as provoking to God.

If you say that you read, and pray, and attend public worship, because that is the appointed way for you to seek salvation; so is bounty to the poor, as much as those.—The appointed way for us to seek the favour of God and

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eternal life, is the way of the performance of all known duties, of which giving to the poor is one as much known, and as necessary, as reading the scriptures, praying, or any other. Shewing mercy to the poor does as much belong to the appointed way of seeking salvation, as any other duty whatever. Therefore this is the way in which Daniel directed Nebuchadnezzar to seek mercy, in Dan. iv. 27. "Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by *shewing mercy to the poor*."

Objec. II. If I be liberal and bountiful, I shall only make a righteousness of it, and so it will do me more hurt than good. To this I say,

1. The same answer may be made to this, as to the former objection, *viz.* That you may as well make the same objection against doing any religious or moral duty at all. If this be a sufficient objection against deeds of charity, then it is a sufficient objection to prayer; for nothing is more common than for persons to make a righteousness of their prayers. So it is a good objection against your keeping the sabbath, or attending any public worship, or ever reading in the Bible; for of all these things you are in danger of making a righteousness.—Yea, if the objection be good against deeds of charity, then it is as good against acts of justice; and you may neglect to speak the truth, may neglect to pay your debts, may neglect acts of common humanity; for of all those things you are in danger of making a righteousness. So that if your objection be good, you may throw up all religion, and live like heathens or atheists, and may be thieves, robbers, fornicators, adulterers, murderers, and commit all the sins that you can think of, lest if you should do otherwise, you should make a righteousness of your conduct.

2. Your objection carries it thus, that it is not best for you to do as God commands and counsels you to do. We find many commands in scripture to be charitable to the poor: the Bible is full of them, and you are not excepted from those commands. God makes no exception of any particular kinds of persons that are especially in danger of making a righteousness of what they do; and God often directs and counsels persons to this duty. Now will you presume to say that God has not directed you to the best way? He has advised you to do thus; but you think it not best for you, but that it would do you more hurt than good, if you should do it. You think there is other counsel better than God's, and that it is the best way for you to go contrary to God's command.

Objec. III. I have in times past given to the poor, but never found myself the better for it. I have heard ministers

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preach, that giving to the poor was the way to prosper; but I perceive not that I am more prosperous than I was before.—Yea, I have met with many misfortunes, crosses, and disappointments in my affairs since. And it may be that some will say, That very year, or soon after the very time I had been giving to the poor, hoping to be blessed for it, I met with great losses, and things went hardly with me; and therefore I do not find what I hear preached about giving to the poor, as being the way to be blessed and prosperous, agreeable to my experience.

To this objection I shall answer several things:

1. Perhaps you looked out for the fulfilment of the promise too soon, before you had fulfilled the condition; as particularly, perhaps you have been so sparing and grudging in your kindness to the poor, that what you have done has been rather a discovery of a covetous, niggardly spirit, than of any bounty or liberality. The promises are not made to every man who gives any thing at all to the poor, let it be ever so little and after what manner soever given. You mistook the promises, if you understood them so. A man may give something to the poor, and yet be entitled to no promise, either temporal or spiritual. The promises are made to *mercy* and *liberality*. But a man may give something, and yet be so niggardly and grudging in it, that what he gives may be as the apostle calls it, a matter of covetousness. What he does may be more a manifestation of his covetousness and closeness, than any thing else. But there are no promises made to men's expressing their covetousness.

Perhaps what you gave was not freely given, but as it were of necessity. It was grudgingly; your hearts were grieved when you gave. And if you gave once or twice what was considerable, yet that doth not answer the rule. It may be for all that, that in the general course of your lives you have been far from being kind and liberal to your neighbours. Perhaps you thought that because you once or twice gave a few shillings to the poor, that then you stood entitled to the promises of being blessed in all your concerns, and of increasing and being established by liberal things; though in the general you have lived in a faulty neglect of the duty of charity. You raise objections from experience, before you have made trial. To give once, or twice, or thrice, is not to make trial, though you give considerably. You cannot make any trial, unless you become a liberal person, or unless you become such that you may be truly said to be of a liberal and bountiful practice. Let one who is truly such, and has been such in the general course of his life, tell what he hath found by experience.

2. If you have been liberal to the poor, and have met with calamities since, yet how can you tell how much greater

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calamities and losses you might have met with, if you had been otherwise? You say you have met with crosses, and disappointments, and frowns. If you expected to meet with no trouble in the world, because you gave to the poor, you mistook the matter. Though there be many and great promises made to the liberal, yet God hath no where promised, that they shall not find this world a world of trouble. It will be so to all. Man is born to sorrow, and must expect no other than to meet with sorrow here. But how can you tell how much greater sorrow you would have met with, if you had been close and unmerciful to the poor? How can you tell how much greater losses you would have met with? How much more vexation and trouble would have followed you? Have none ever met with greater frowns in their outward affairs, than you have?

3. How can you tell what blessings God hath yet in reserve for you, if you do but continue in well-doing? Although God hath promised great blessings to liberality to the poor, yet he hath not limited himself as to the time of the bestowment. If you have not yet seen any evident fruit of your kindness to the poor, yet the time may come when you shall see it remarkably, and that at a time when you most stand in need of it. You cast your bread upon the waters, and looked for it, and expected to find it again presently. And sometimes it is so; but this is not promised: it is promised, "Thou shalt find it again *after many days*." God knows how to choose a time for you, better than you yourselves. You should therefore wait his time. If you go on in well-doing, God may bring it to you when you stand most in need.

It may be that there is some winter coming, some day of trouble; and God keeps your bread for you against that time; and then God will give you good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over. We must trust in God's word for the bestowment of the promised reward, whether we can see in what manner it is done or no. Pertinent to the present purpose are those words of the wise man in Eccles. xi. 4. "He that observeth the winds shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap." In this context the wise man is speaking of charity to the poor, and comparing it to sowing seed: and advises us to trust Providence for success in that, as we do in sowing seed. He that regardeth the winds and clouds, to prognosticate thence prosperity to seed, and will not trust Providence with it, is not like to sow, nor to have bread-corn. So he that will not trust Providence for the reward of his charity to the poor, is like to go without the blessing. After the words now quoted, follows his advice, ver. 6. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not

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whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."—Therefore, (Gal. vi. 9,) "Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." You think you have not reaped yet. Whether you have or not, go on still in giving and doing good; and if you do so, you shall reap in due time. God only knows the due time, the best time for you to reap.

OBJEC. IV. Some may object against charity to such or such particular persons, that they are not obliged to give them any thing; for though they be needy, yet they are not in extremity. It is true they meet with difficulty, yet not so but that they can live, though they suffer some hardships.—But,

It doth not answer the rules of Christian charity, to relieve those only who are reduced to extremity, as might be abundantly shewn. I shall at this time mention but two things as evidences of it.

1. We are commanded to love and treat one another as brethren: 1 Pet. iii. 8. "Have compassion one of another; love as brethren; be pitiful." Now, is it the part of brethren to refuse to help one another, and to do any thing for each other's comfort, and for the relief of each other's difficulties, only when they are in extremity? Doth it not become brothers and sisters to have a more friendly disposition one towards another, than this comes to? and to be ready to compassionate one another under difficulties, though they be not extreme?

The rule of the gospel is, that when we see our brother under any difficulty or burden, we should be ready to bear the burden with him: Gal. vi. 2. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." So we are commanded, *by love to serve one another*, Gal. v. 13. The Christian spirit will make us apt to sympathize with our neighbour, when we see him under any difficulty: Rom. xii. 15. "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." When our neighbour is in difficulty, he is afflicted; and we ought to have such a spirit of love to him, as to be afflicted with him in his affliction. And if we ought to be afflicted with him, then it will follow, that we ought to be ready to relieve him; because, if we are afflicted with him, in relieving him we relieve ourselves. His relief is so far our own relief, as his affliction is our affliction. Christianity teaches us to be afflicted in our neighbour's affliction; and nature teaches us to relieve ourselves when afflicted.

We should behave ourselves one towards another as brethren that are fellow-travellers; for we are pilgrims and strangers here on earth, and are on a journey. Now, if brethren be on a journey together, and one meet with difficulty

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in the way, doth it not become the rest to help him, not only in the extremity of broken bones, or the like, but as to provision for the journey, if his own fall short? It becomes his fellow-travellers to afford him a supply out of their stores, and not to be over nice, exact, and fearful lest they give him too much; for it is but provision for a journey; and all are supplied when they get to their journey's end.

2. That we should relieve our neighbour only when in extremity, is not agreeable to the rule of loving our neighbour as ourselves. That rule implies that our love towards our neighbour should work in the same manner, and express itself in the same ways, as our love towards ourselves. We are very sensible of our own difficulties; we should also be readily sensible of theirs. From love to ourselves, when we are under difficulties, and suffer hardships, we are concerned for our relief, are wont to seek relief, and lay ourselves out for it.—And as we would love our neighbour as ourselves, we ought in like manner to be concerned when our neighbour is under difficulty, and to seek his relief. We are wont to be much concerned about our own difficulties, though we be not reduced to extremity, and are willing in those cases to lay ourselves out for our own relief. So, as we would love our neighbour as ourselves, we should in like manner lay out ourselves to obtain relief for him, though his difficulties be not extreme.

Objec. V. Some may object against charity to a particular object, because he is an ill sort of person; he deserves not that people should be kind to him; he is of a very ill temper, of an ungrateful spirit, and particularly, because he hath not deserved well of *them*, but has treated them ill, has been injurious to them, and even now entertains an ill spirit against them.

But we are obliged to relieve persons in want, notwithstanding these things; both by the general and particular rules of God's word.

1. We are obliged to do so by the *general* rules of scripture. I shall mention two.

(1.) That of loving our neighbour as ourselves. A man may be our *neighbour*, though he be an ill sort of man, and even our enemy, as Christ himself teaches us by his discourse with the lawyer, Luke x. 25, &c. A certain lawyer came to Christ, and asked him, What he should do to inherit eternal life? Christ asked him, How it was written in the law? He answers, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." Christ tells him, that if he shall do thus, he shall live. But then the lawyer asks him, who is his neighbour? because is was a received doctrine among the Pharisees, that no man was their neighbour,

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but their friends, and those of the same people and religion.—Christ answers him by a parable, or story of a certain man, who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed from him, leaving him half-dead. Soon after there came a priest that way, who saw the poor man that had been thus cruelly treated by the thieves; but passed by without affording him any relief. The same was done by a Levite.—But a certain Samaritan coming that way, as soon as he saw the half-dead man, had compassion on him, took him up, bound up his wounds, set him on his own beast, carried him to the inn, and took care of him, paying the innkeeper money for his past and future expence; and promising him still more, if he should find it necessary to be at more expence on behalf of the man.

Then Christ asks the lawyer, which of these three, the priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan, was neighbour to the man that fell among the thieves. Christ proposed this in such a manner, that the lawyer could not help owning that the Samaritan did well in relieving the Jew, that he did the duty of a neighbour to him. Now, there was an inveterate enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans. They hated one another more than any other nation in the world; and the Samaritans were a people exceedingly troublesome to the Jews: yet we see that Christ teaches, that the Jews ought to do the part of neighbours to the Samaritans; *i. e.* to love them as themselves; for it was that of which Christ was speaking.

And the consequence was plain. If the Samaritan was neighbour to the distressed Jew, then the Jews, by a parity of reason, were neighbours to the Samaritans. If the Samaritan did well, in relieving a Jew that was his enemy; then the Jews would do well in relieving the Samaritans, their enemies.—What I particularly observe is, that Christ here plainly teaches that our enemies, those that abuse and injure us, are our neighbours, and therefore come under the rule of loving our neighbour as ourselves.

(2.) Another general rule that obliges us to the same thing, is that wherein we are commanded to love one another, as Christ hath loved us. We have it in John xiii. 34. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Christ calls it a *new* commandment, with respect to that old commandment of loving our neighbour as ourselves. This command of loving our neighbour as Christ hath loved us, opens our duty to us in a new manner, and in a further degree than that did. We must not only love our neighbour as ourselves, but as Christ hath loved us. We have the same again, John xv. 12. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you."

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Now, the meaning of this is, not that we should love one another to the same *degree* that Christ loved us; though there ought to be a proportion, considering our nature and capacity; but that we should exercise our love one to another in like *manner*. As, for instance, Christ hath loved us so as to be willing to deny himself, and to suffer greatly, in order to help us; so should we be willing to deny ourselves, in order to help one another. Christ loved us, and shewed us great kindness, though we were far below him; so should we shew kindness to those of our fellow-men who are far below us. Christ denied himself to help us, though we are not able to recompense him; so should we be willing to lay out ourselves to help our neighbour, freely expecting nothing again. Christ loved us, was kind to us, and was willing to relieve us, though we were very evil and hateful, of an evil disposition, not deserving any good, but deserving only to be hated, and treated with indignation; so we should be willing to be kind to those who are of an ill disposition, and are very undeserving. Christ loved us, and laid himself out to relieve us, though we were his enemies, and had treated him ill; so we, as we would love one another as Christ hath loved us, should relieve those who are our enemies, hate us, have an ill spirit towards us, and have treated us ill.

2. We are obliged to this duty by many *particular* rules. We are particularly required to be kind to the unthankful and to the evil; and therein to follow the example of our heavenly Father, who causes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. We are obliged, not only to be kind to them that are so to us, but to them that hate, and that despitefully use us. I need not mention the particular places which speak to this effect.

Not but that when persons are virtuous and pious, and of a grateful disposition, and are friendly disposed towards us, they are more the objects of our charity for it, and our obligation to kindness to them is the greater. Yet if things be otherwise, that doth not render them not fit objects of our charity, nor set us free from obligation to kindness towards them.

Objec. VI. Some may object from their own circumstances, that they have nothing to spare; they have not more than enough for themselves.—I answer,

1. It must doubtless be allowed, that in some cases persons, by reason of their own circumstances, are not obliged to give to others.—For instance, if there be a contribution for the poor, they are not obliged to join in the contribution, who are in as much need as those are for whom the contribution is made. It savours of ridiculous vanity in them to contribute

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with others for such as are not more needy than they. It savours of a proud desire to conceal their own circumstances, and an affectation of having them accounted above what they in truth are.

2. There are scarcely any who may not make this objection, as they interpret it. There is no person who may not say, he has not more than enough for himself, as he may mean by *enough*. He may intend, that he has not more than he desires, or more than he can dispose of to his own advantage; or not so much, but that, if he had any thing less, he should look upon himself in worse circumstances than he is in now. He will own, that he could live if he had less; but then he will say he could not live so well. Rich men may say, they have not more than enough for themselves, as they may mean by it. They need it all, they may say, to support their honour and dignity, as is proper for the place and degree in which they stand. Those who are poor, to be sure, will say, *they* have not too much for themselves; those who are of the middle sort will say, *they* have not too much for themselves; and the rich will say, *they* have not too much for themselves. Thus there will be none found to give to the poor.

3. In many cases, we may, by the rules of the gospel, be obliged to give to others, when we cannot do it without suffering ourselves; as, if our neighbour's difficulties and necessities be much greater than our own, and we see that he is not like to be otherwise relieved, we should be willing to suffer with him, and to take part of his burden on ourselves; else how is that rule of *bearing one another's burdens* fulfilled? If we be never obliged to relieve other's burdens, but when we can do it without burdening ourselves, then how do we bear our neighbour's burdens, when we bear no burden at all? Though we may not have a superfluity, yet we may be obliged to afford relief to others who are in much greater necessity; as appears by that rule, Luke iii. 11. "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise."—Yea, they who are very poor may be obliged to give for the relief of others in much greater distress than they. If there be no other way of relief, those who have the lightest burden are obliged still to take some part of their neighbour's burden, to make it the more supportable. A brother may be obliged to help a brother in extremity, though they are both very much in want. The apostle commends the Macedonian Christians, that they were liberal to their brethren, though they themselves were in deep poverty: 2 Cor. viii. 1, 2. "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: how in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality."

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4. Those who have not too much for themselves are willing to spare seed to sow, that they may have fruit hereafter. Perhaps they need that which they scatter in the field, and seem to throw away. They may need it for bread for their families; yet they will spare seed to sow, that they may provide for the future, and may have increase. But we have already shewn, that giving to the poor is in scripture compared to sowing seed, and is as much the way to increase as the sowing of seed is. It doth not tend to poverty, but the contrary; it is not the way to diminish our substance, but to increase it. All the difficulty in this matter is in trusting God with what we give, in trusting his promises. If men could but trust the faithfulness of God to his own promises, they would give freely.

Objec. VII. Some may object concerning a particular person, that they do not certainly know whether he be an object of charity or not. They are not perfectly acquainted with his circumstances; neither do they know what sort of man he is. They know not whether he be in want as he pretends. Or, if they know this, they know not how he came to be in want; whether it were not by his own idleness, or prodigality. Thus they argue that they cannot be obliged, till they certainly know these things.—I reply,

1. This is Nabal's objection, for which he is greatly condemned in scripture; see 1 Sam. xxv. David in his exiled state came and begged relief of Nabal. Nabal objected, ver. 10, 11. "Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? There be many servants now-a-days, that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?" His objection was, that David was a stranger to him; he did not know who he was, nor what his circumstances were. He did not know but that he was a runaway; and he was not obliged to support and harbour a runaway. He objected, that he knew not that he was a proper object of charity; that he knew not but that he was very much the contrary.

But Abigail no way countenanced his behaviour herein, but greatly condemned it. She calls him a man of Belial, and says that he was as his name was; Nabal was his name, and folly was with him. And her behaviour was very contrary to his; and she is greatly commended for it. The Holy Ghost tells us in that chapter, ver. 3, That *she was a woman of a good understanding*. At the same time God exceedingly frowned on Nabal's behaviour on this occasion, as we are informed that about ten days after God smote Nabal that he died; ver. 38.

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This story is doubtless told us partly for this end, to discountenance too great a scrupulosity as to the object on whom we bestow our charity, and the making of this merely an objection against charity to others, that we do not certainly know their circumstances. It is true, when we have opportunity to become certainly acquainted with their circumstances, it is well to embrace it; and to be influenced in a measure by probability in such cases, is not to be condemned. Yet it is better to give to several that are not objects of charity, than to send away empty one that is.

2. We are commanded to be kind to strangers whom we know not, nor their circumstances. This is commanded in many places; but I shall mention only one; Heb. xiii. 2. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." By strangers here the apostle means one whom we know not, and whose circumstances we know not; as is evident by these words, "for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." Those who entertained angels unawares, did not know the persons whom they entertained, nor their circumstances; else how could it be unawares?

OBJEC. VIII. Some may say they are not obliged to give to the poor, till they ask. If any man is in necessity, let him come and make known his straits to me, and then it will be time enough for me to give him. Or if he need a public contribution, let him come and ask. I do not know that the congregation or church is obliged to relieve till they ask relief.—I answer,

1. It surely is the most charitable, to relieve the needy in that way wherein we shall do them the greatest kindness. Now it is certain that we shall do them a greater kindness by inquiring into their circumstances, and relieving them, without putting them upon begging. There is none of us but who, if it were their case, would look upon it more kind in our neighbours, to inquire into our circumstances, and help us of their own accord. To put our neighbours upon begging in order to relief, is painful. It is more charitable, more brotherly, more becoming Christians and the disciples of Jesus, to do it without. I think this is self-evident, and needs no proof.

2. This is not agreeable to the character of the liberal man given in scripture, *viz.* that devises liberal things. Isa. xxxii. 8. It is not to devise liberal things, if we neglect all liberality till the poor come a begging to us. But to inquire, who stand in need of our charity, and to contrive to relieve them in the way that shall do them the greatest kindness; that is to devise liberal things.

3. We should not commend a man for doing so to his

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own brother. If a man had an own brother or sister in great straits, and he were well able to supply them, under the pretence, that if he or she want any thing, let them come and ask, and I will give them; we should hardly think such an one behaved like a brother. Christians are commanded to love as brethren, to look upon one another as brethren in Christ, and to treat one another as such.

4. We should commend others for taking a method contrary to that which is proposed by the objector. If we should hear or read of a people who were so charitable, who took such care of the poor, and were so concerned that none among them should suffer, who were proper objects of charity; that they were wont diligently to inquire into the circumstances of their neighbours, to find out who were needy, and liberally supplied them of their own accord; I say, if we should hear or read of such a people, would it not appear well to us? Should not we have the better thought of that people, on that account?

Objec. IX. He has brought himself to want by his own fault.—In reply, it must be considered what you mean by his fault.

1. If you mean a want of a natural faculty to manage affairs to advantage, that is to be considered as his calamity. Such a faculty is a gift that God bestows on some, and not on others; and it is not owing to themselves. You ought to be thankful that God hath given you such a gift, which he hath denied to the person in question. And it will be a very suitable way for you to shew your thankfulness, to help those to whom that gift is denied, and let them share the benefit of it with you. This is as reasonable as that he to whom Providence has imparted sight, should be willing to help him to whom sight is denied; and that he should have the benefit of the sight of others, who has none of his own; or, as that he to whom God hath given wisdom should be willing that the ignorant should have the benefit of his knowledge.

2. If they have been reduced to want by some oversight, and are to be blamed that they did not consider for themselves better; yet that doth not free us from all obligation to charity towards them. If we should for ever refuse to help men because of that, it would be for us to make their inconsiderateness and imprudent act, an unpardonable crime, quite contrary to the rules of the gospel, which insist so much upon forgiveness.—We should not be disposed so highly to resent such an oversight in any for whom we have a dear affection, as our children, or our friends. We should not refuse to help them in that necessity and distress, which they brought upon themselves by their own inconsiderateness. But we ought to

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have a dear affection and concern for the welfare of all our fellow Christians, whom we should love as brethren, and as Christ hath loved us.

3. If they are come to want by a vicious idleness and prodigality; yet we are not thereby excused from all obligation to relieve them, unless they continue in those vices. If they continue not in those vices, the rules of the gospel direct us to forgive them; and if their fault be forgiven, then it will not remain to be a bar in the way of our charitably relieving them. If we do otherwise, we shall act in a manner very contrary to the rule of *loving one another as Christ hath loved us.* Now Christ hath loved us, pitied us, and greatly laid out himself to relieve us from that want and misery which we brought on ourselves by our own folly and wickedness. We foolishly and perversely threw away those riches with which we were provided, upon which we might have lived and been happy to all eternity.

4. If they continue in the same courses still, yet that doth not excuse us from charity to their families that are innocent. If we cannot relieve those of their families without their having something of it; yet that ought not to be a bar in the way of our charity; and that because it is supposed that those of their families are proper objects of charity; and those that are so, we are bound to relieve: the command is positive and absolute. If we look upon that which the heads of the families have of what we give, to be entirely lost; yet we had better lose something of our estate, than suffer those who are really proper objects of charity to remain without relief.

OBJEC. X. Some may object and say, Others do not their duty. If others did their duty, the poor would be sufficiently supplied. If others did as much as we in proportion to their ability and obligation, the poor would have enough to help them out of their straits. Or some may say, it belongs to others more than it does to us. They have relations that ought to help them; or there are others to whom it more properly belongs than to us.

ANS. We ought to relieve those who are in want, though brought to it through others' fault. If our neighbour be poor, though others be to blame that it is so, yet that excuses us not from helping him. If it belong to others more than to us, yet if those others will neglect their duty, and our neighbour therefore remains in want, we may be obliged to relieve him. If a man be brought into straits through the injustice of others, suppose by thieves or robbers, as the poor Jew whom the Samaritan relieved; yet we may be obliged to relieve him, though it be not through our fault that he is in want, but

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through that of other men. And whether that fault be a commission or a neglect alters not the case.

As to the poor Jew that fell among thieves between Jerusalem and Jericho, it more properly belonged to those thieves who brought him into that distress, to relieve him, than to any other person. Yet seeing they would not do it, others were not excused; and the Samaritan did no more than his duty, relieving him as he did, though it properly belonged to others.—Thus if a man have children or other relations, to whom it most properly belongs to relieve him; yet if they will not do it, the obligation to relieve him falls upon others. So for the same reason we should do the more for the relief of the poor, because others neglect to do their proportion, or what belongs to them; and that because by the neglect of others to do their proportion they need the more, their necessity is the greater.

Objec. XI. The law makes provision for the poor, and obliges the respective towns in which they live to provide for them; therefore some argue, that there is no occasion for particular persons to exercise any charity this way. They say, the case is not the same with us now, as it was in the primitive church; for then Christians were under an Heathen government: and however the charity of Christians in those times be much to be commended; yet now, by reason of our different circumstances, there is no occasion for private charity; because, in the state in which Christians now are, provision is made for the poor otherwise.—This objection is built upon these two suppositions, both which I suppose are false.

1. That the towns are obliged by law to relieve every one who otherwise would be an object of charity. This I suppose to be false, unless it be supposed that none are proper objects of charity, but those that have no estate left to live upon, which is very unreasonable, and what I have already shewn to be false, in answer to the fourth objection, in shewing that it doth not answer the rules of Christian charity, to relieve only those who are reduced to extremity.

Nor do I suppose it was ever the design of the law, requiring the various towns to support their own poor, to cut off all occasion for Christian charity: nor is it fit there should be such a law. It is fit that the law should make provision for those that have no estates of their own; it is not fit that persons who are reduced to that extremity should be left to so precarious a source of supply as a voluntary charity. They are in extreme necessity of relief, and therefore it is fit that there should be something sure for them to depend on. But a voluntary charity in this corrupt world is an uncertain thing. Therefore the wisdom of the legislature did not think fit

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to leave those who are so reduced, upon such a precarious foundation for subsistence. But I suppose not that it was ever the design of the law to make such provision for all that are in want, as to leave no room for Christian charity.

2. This objection is built upon another supposition, which is equally false, *viz.* That there are in fact none who are proper objects of charity, but those that are relieved by the town. Let the design of the law be what it will, yet if there are in fact persons who are so in want, as to stand in need of our charity, then that law doth not free us from obligation to relieve them by our charity. For as we have just now shewn, in answer to the last objection, if it more properly belong to others to relieve them than us; yet if they do it not, we are not free. So that if it be true, that it *belongs* to the town to relieve all who are proper objects of charity; yet if the town *in fact* do it not, we are not excused.

If one of our neighbours suffers through the fault of a particular person, of a thief or robber, or of a town, it alters not the case: but if he suffer and be without relief, it is an act of Christian charity in us to relieve him. Now it is too obvious to be denied, that there are in fact persons so in want, that it would be a charitable act in us to help them, notwithstanding all that is done by the town. A man must hide his mental eyes, to think otherwise.

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CHRIST EXALTED:

OR,

JESUS CHRIST

GLORIOUSLY EXALTED ABOVE ALL EVIL

IN THE

WORK OF REDEMPTION.

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SERMON I.

CHRIST EXALTED, &c.

1 Corinthians, xv. 25, 26.

For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

The apostle in this chapter particularly opposes some among the Christian Corinthians, who denied the resurrection of the dead, and infested the church with their doctrine. There were two sorts of persons in that age, who were especially great opposers of the doctrine of the resurrection; one among the Jews, and the other among the Heathen. Among the *Jews* were the Sadducees, of whom we read, Acts xxiii. 8. "For the Sadducees say, that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit:" and we have the same account in other places. Among the *Heathen*, that were the chief opposers of this doctrine, were their philosophers. The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, was not consistent with their philosophy, by the principles of which, it was impossible that one who was deprived of the habit of life, should ever receive it again. And therefore they ridiculed the doctrine when the apostle preached it among them at Athens.* Probably the church at Corinth received this corruption from the philosophers, and not the Sadducees. For Corinth was near to Athens, the place of the chief resort of the philosophers of Greece.

The apostle, in opposing this error, first insists on Christ's resurrection from the dead; and next on the resurrection of all the saints at the end of the world. And in the verses next

* Acts xvii.

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before the text, shews how both are connected, or that one arises or follows from the other. And then adds, "then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."—Observe,

1. Here is one thing wherein appears the glory of that exaltation and dominion, that Christ has as our Redeemer, *viz.* that it issues in the subjection of all enemies under his feet. It is not said all *his* enemies; possibly, because those that shall be put under his feet, are not only his enemies, but also the enemies of his Father, and of his people. Their being *under his feet*, denotes their being perfectly subdued, and his being gloriously exalted over them. It shall be thus with respect to God's and his, and his people's enemies universally, not one excepted; which universality is signified here two ways; *all enemies*—and the very *last enemy;* when there shall be but one enemy left, that shall also be put under his feet.

2. We may learn what is here meant by *enemies*, by the particular instance here given as the *last* that shall be destroyed, viz. *death*. Which shews, that by enemies, is not meant *persons* only, that set themselves in opposition to God and his people, but *evils;* whatever is against God and his people, and opposes Christ or his saints, whether they be persons or things.

SECT. I.

How Evil of all kinds has prevailed and highly exalted itself in the World.

EVIL, of all kinds, has risen to an exceeding height in the world, and highly exalted itself against God, and Christ, and the church.—This will appear by the following particulars.

1. *Satan* has highly exalted himself, and greatly prevailed. He is vastly superior, in his natural capacity and abilities, to mankind. He was originally one of the highest rank of creatures; but proudly exalted himself, in rebellion, against God in heaven. We are told, that *pride* was *the condemnation of the devil.*+ He became proud of his own superior dignity and mighty abilities, and the glory which his Creator had put upon him; and probably thought it too much to submit to the

* 1 Tim. iii. 6.

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Son of God, and attempted to exalt his throne above him. And he prevailed to draw away vast multitudes of the heavenly hosts, into an open rebellion against God.

And after he was cast down from heaven, he proudly exalted himself in this world, and prevailed to do great things. By his subtile temptations he procured the fall of our first parents, and so brought about the ruin of their whole race. He procured their ruin in body and soul, and the death of both; and that they should be exposed to all manner of calamity in this world, and to eternal ruin hereafter. He so far prevailed, that he drew men off from the service of their Maker, and set up himself to be the god of this world; and in a little time drew the world into that almost universal corruption, which brought on the flood of waters, by which it was destroyed. And after that, he drew off all nations, except the posterity of Jacob, from the worship of the true God, and darkened all the world with heathenism; and held them under this darkness for a great many ages; he himself being worshipped as God almost all over the world: the nations of the earth offered sacrifices to him; and multitudes offered up their children. And during that time, he often so far prevailed against the people of God, that he had almost swallowed them up. The church was often brought to the very brink of ruin.

And when Christ himself appeared in the world, how did he exalt himself against him! and prevailed so far, as to influence men to hate and despise him all the days of his life. And at last he persuaded one of his own disciples to betray him. Accordingly, he was delivered into the hands of men, to be mocked, buffeted, spit upon, and treated with the greatest ignominy that unrestrained malice could devise; and at last procured that he should be put to the most cruel and ignominious kind of death. And since that, he has greatly exalted himself against the gospel and kingdom of Christ. He has procured that the church, for the most part, has been the subject of great persecution; has often brought it to the brink of utter destruction; has accomplished great works in setting up those great kingdoms of Antichrist and Mahomet; and darkened great part of the world, that was once enlightened with the gospel of Christ, with worse than Heathen darkness. And he has infected the Christian world with multitudes of heresies and false ways of worship, and greatly promoted atheism and infidelity. Thus highly has the devil exalted himself against God and Christ, and the elect: and so far has he prevailed.

2. *Guilt* is another evil which has come to a great height in the world. All guilt is an evil of a dreadful nature: the least degree of it is enough utterly to undo any creature.

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It is a thing that reaches unto heaven, and cries to God, and brings down his wrath. The guilt of any one sin is so terrible an evil, that it prevails to bind over the guilty person to suffer everlasting burnings: and so is in some respect infinite, in that it obliges to that punishment which has no end; and so is infinitely terrible. But this kind of evil has risen to a most amazing height in this world; where not only some persons are guilty, but all, in all nations and ages, are naturally guilty wretches. And they who live to act any time in the world, are not only guilty of one sin, but of thousands, and thousands of thousands. What multiplied, and what aggravated sins are some men guilty of! What guilt lies on some particular persons! How much more on some particular populous cities! How much more still on this wicked world! How much does the guilt of the world transcend all account; all expression; all powers of numbers or measures! And above all, how vast is the guilt of the world, in all ages, from the beginning to the end of it! To what a pitch has guilt risen! The world being, as it were, on every side, loaded with it, as with mountains heaped on mountains, above the clouds and stars of heaven.

And guilt, when it was imputed to Christ, greatly prevailed against him—though in himself innocent, and the eternal Son of God—even so as to hold him prisoner of justice for awhile; and to open the flood-gates of God's wrath upon him, and bring all his waves and billows over him.

3. *Corruption* and wickedness of heart, is another thing that has risen to an exceeding height in the world. Sin has so far prevailed, that it has become universal: all, mere men, are become sinful and corrupt creatures. Let us attend to St. Paul's description of the world.* "Jews and Gentiles are all under sin. As is written, There is none righteous, no not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no not one." And not only is every one corrupt; but they are all over corrupt, in every power, faculty, and principle; every part is depraved. Which is here represented by the several parts of the body being corrupt, as the throat, the tongue, the lips, the mouth, the feet. "Their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they have used deceit, the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood." And not only is every part corrupt, but exceeding corrupt; being possessed with dreadful principles of corruption, horribly evil dispositions and principles of sin, that may be

* Rom. iii. 9—18.

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represented by the poison of asps: which makes men like vipers and devils; principles of all uncleanness, pride, deceit, injustice, enmity, malice, blasphemy, murder. Here their *throats* are compared to an *open sepulchre*, and their *mouth* is said to be full of *cursing and bitterness*, and destruction and misery are said to be in their ways.

And there are those principles of sin not only that are very bad, but every kind; here is no sort of wickedness, but there is a seed of it in men. And these seeds and principles have not only a being in men's hearts, but are there in great strength: they have the absolute possession and dominion over men, so that they are *sold under sin.* Yea, wicked principles, and those only, are in the heart. *The imagination of the thoughts of their heart is evil only.* There are bad principles only, and no good ones. *There is no fear of God before their eyes.* Thus the hearts of all men are *deceitful and desperately wicked.**

And if we look, not only at the natural corruption of the heart, but at the contracted habits of sin, by wicked education and customs, how full shall we find the world of wickedness, in this respect? How have men, by bad customs in sinning, broken down all restraints upon natural corruption, and as it were abandoned themselves to wickedness! So far has corruption and wickedness prevailed in the world, and so high has it risen, that it is become a great and universal deluge, that overtops all things, and prevails with that strength, that it is like the raging waves of the tempestuous ocean; which are ready to bear down all before them.

4. Many of the *devil's instruments* have greatly prevailed, and have been exalted to an exceeding height in the world. It has been so in almost all ages of the world. Many of the devil's instruments have prospered and prevailed, till they have got to the head of great kingdoms and empires, with vast riches and mighty power.

Those four great Heathen monarchies that rose in the world before Christ,† are spoken of in scripture as kingdoms set up in opposition to the kingdom of Christ. So they are represented in the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.‡ These monarchies were exceeding powerful. The two last ruled over the greater part of the then known world. And the last especially, *viz.* the Roman empire, was exceeding mighty: so that it is said to be divers from all kingdoms; and that it should devour the whole earth, and tread it down, and break it in pieces.§ It is represented by the fourth beast, which was dreadful and terrible; and strong exceedingly; and

* Jer. xvii. 9.
† The Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman monarchies.
‡ Dan. ii. 35, 36. § Dan. vii. 23.

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had great iron teeth, that devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet.* These four kingdoms all persecuted the church of God in their turns, especially the last. One of the governors of this monarchy put Christ to death. And afterwards one emperor after another, made dreadful havoc of the church; making a business of it, with the force of all the empire, to torment and destroy the Christians; endeavouring, if possible, to root out the Christian name from under heaven.

And in these latter ages, how have those two great instruments of the devil, *viz.* Antichrist and Mahomet, prevailed, and to what a pitch of advancement have they arrived; ruling over vast empires, with mighty wealth, pride and power: so that the earth has been, as it were, subdued by them. Antichrist has set up himself as the vicar of Christ; and has for many ages usurped the power of God, "sitting in the temple of God, and shewing himself that he is God; and exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped." And how dreadfully has he ravaged the church of God, being drunk with the blood of the saints, and the martyrs of Jesus. And has often, as it were, deluged the world in Christian blood, shed with the utmost cruelty that human wit and malice could invent.—And at this day, many other instruments of the devil, many heretics, atheists and other infidels, are exerting themselves against Christ and his church, with great pride and contempt.

5. *Affliction* and misery have also prevailed and risen to an unspeakable height in the world. The spiritual misery which the elect are naturally in, is great. They are miserable captives of sin and Satan, and under obligations to suffer eternal burnings. This misery all mankind are naturally in. And spiritual troubles and sorrows have often risen to a great height in the elect. The troubles of a wounded spirit and guilty conscience, have been felt with intolerable and insupportable weight. "A wounded spirit who can bear?"† And the darkness that has risen to God's people after conversion, through the temptations and buffetings of the devil, and the hidings of God's face, and manifestations of his anger, have been very terrible. And temporal afflictions have often risen exceeding high. The church of God has, for the most part, all along, been a seat of great affliction and tribulation.

But the height to which the evil of affliction has risen, nowhere appears so much, as in the afflictions that Christ suffered. The evil of affliction and sorrow exalted itself so high, as to seize the Son of God himself, and to cause him to be all in a bloody sweat, and to mak his soul exceeding sorrowful,

* Dan. vii. 7. † Prov. xviii. 14.

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even unto death. It caused him to cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Affliction never prevailed to such a degree in this world, as in Christ, whose soul was, as it were, overwhelmed in an ocean of it.

6. *Death* is an evil which has greatly prevailed, and made dreadful havoc in this world. How does it waste and devour mankind, one age after another; sparing none, high or low, rich or poor, good or bad! Wild beasts have destroyed many; many cruel princes have taken away the lives of thousands, and laid waste whole countries: but death devours all; none are suffered to escape. And the bodies of the saints as well as others, fall a prey to this great devourer. Yea, so high did this enemy rise, that he took hold on Christ himself, and swallowed him among the rest. He became the prey of this great, insatiable monster. By his means, was his bodily frame destroyed, and laid dead in the dark and silent grave. And death still goes on destroying thousands every day. And therefore the grave is one of those things which Agur says, never has enough.*—So have evils of every kind prevailed; and to such a degree have they exalted themselves in the world.

SECT. II.

How Jesus Christ, in the work of Redemption, appears gloriously above all these evils.

It was not the will of the infinitely wise and holy Governor of the world, that things should remain in this confusion; this reign of evil, which had prevailed and exalted itself to such a height. But he had a design of subduing it; and delivering an elect part of the world from it, and exalting them to the possession of the greatest good, and to reign in the highest glory, out of a state of subjection to all these evils. And he chose his Son as the person most fit for an undertaking that was infinitely too great for any mere creature: and he has undertaken the work of our redemption. And though these evils are so many and so great, and have prevailed to such a degree, and have risen to such a height, and have been, as it were, all combined together; yet wherein they have exalted themselves, Christ, in the work of redemption, appears above them. He hath gloriously prevailed against them all, and brings them under his feet; and rides forth, in the chariots of salvation, over their heads; or leading them in triumph at his chariot wheels. He appears in this work infinitely higher and mightier than

* Prov. xxx. 16.

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they, and sufficient to carry his people above them, and utterly to destroy them all.

1. Christ appears gloriously above all evil in what he did to procure redemption for us in his state of *humiliation*, by the righteousness he wrought out, and the atonement he made for sin. The evils mentioned, never seemed so much to prevail against him as in his sufferings: but in them, the foundation was laid for their overthrow. In them he appeared above *Satan*. Though Satan never exalted himself so high, as he did in procuring these sufferings of Christ; yet, then, Christ laid the foundation for the utter overthrow of his kingdom. He slew Satan, as it were, with his own weapon; the spiritual David cut off this Goliath's head with his own sword; and he triumphed over him in his cross. "Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in *it*:"* *i. e.* in his *cross*, mentioned in the preceding words. Then the wisdom of Christ appeared gloriously above the subtilty of Satan. Satan, that old serpent, used a great deal of subtilty to procure Christ's death; and doubtless, when he had accomplished it, thought he had obtained a complete victory; being then ignorant of the contrivance of our redemption. But so did the wisdom of Christ order things, that Satan's subtilty and malice, should be made the very means of undermining the foundations of his kingdom; and so he wisely led him into the pit that he had digged.

In this also Christ appeared gloriously above the guilt of men. For he offered a sacrifice, that was sufficient to do away all the guilt of the whole world. Though the guilt of man was like the great mountains, whose heads are lifted up to the heavens; yet his dying love, and his merits, appeared as a mighty deluge that overflowed the highest mountains; or like a boundless ocean that swallows them up: or like an immense fountain of light, that with the fulness and redundance of its brightness, swallows up men's greatest sins, as little motes are swallowed up and hidden in the disk of the sun.

In this Christ appeared above all the *corruption* of man, in that hereby he purchased holiness for the chief of sinners. And Christ in undergoing such extreme affliction, got the victory over all *misery*; and laid a foundation for its being utterly abolished, with respect to his elect. In dying he became the plague and destruction of death. When death slew him, it slew itself: for Christ through death, destroyed him that had the power of death, even the devil.† By this he laid the foundation of the glorious resurrection of all his people to an immortal life.

* Colos. ii. 15. † Heb. ii. 14.

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2. Christ appears gloriously exalted above all evil, in his *resurrection* and ascension into heaven. When Christ rose from the dead, then it appeared that he was above death, which, though it had taken him captive, could not hold him.

Then he appeared above the devil. Then this Leviathan that had swallowed him, was forced to vomit him up again; as the Philistines that had taken captive the ark, were forced to return it; Dagon being fallen before it, with his head and hands broken off, and only the stumps left.—Then he appeared above our guilt: for he was justified in his resurrection.* In his resurrection he appeared above all affliction. For though he had been subject to much affliction, and overwhelmed in it; he then emerged out of it, as having gotten the victory, never to conflict with any more sorrow.

When he ascended up into heaven, he rose far above the reach of the devil and all his instruments, who had before had him in their hands. And now has he sat down at the right hand of God, as being made head over all things to the church, in order to a complete and perfect victory over sin, Satan, death, and all his enemies. It was then said to him, "Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."† He entered into a state of glory, wherein he is exalted far above all these evils, as the forerunner of his people; and to make intercession for them, till they also are brought to be with him, in like manner exalted above all evil.

3. Christ appears gloriously above all evil, in his work in the *hearts* of the elect, in their conversion and sanctification. This is what the application of redemption, so far as it is applied in this world, consists in; which is done by the Holy Ghost as the spirit of Christ. In this work of Christ in the hearts of his elect, he appears glorious above Satan. For the strong man armed is overcome, and all his armour, wherein he trusted, is taken from him, and his spoil divided. In this work, the lamb is by the spiritual David, taken out of the mouth of the lion and bear: the poor captive is delivered from his mighty and cruel enemies.

In this Christ appears gloriously above the *corruption* and wickedness of the heart; above its natural darkness in dispelling it, and letting in light; and above its enmity and opposition, by prevailing over it, drawing it powerfully and irresistibly to himself, and turning a heart of stone into a heart of flesh: above the obstinacy and perverseness of the will, by making them willing in the day of his power. In this he appears above all their lusts. For all sin is mortified in this work, and the soul is delivered from the power and dominion of it.—In this work the grace of Christ gloriously triumphs over

* Rom. iv. 4, 25. 1 Tim. iii. 16. † Psal. cx. 1.

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men's *guilt*. He comes over the mountains of their sins, and visits them with his salvation.

And God is wont often in this work, either in the beginning or progress of it, to give his people those spiritual comforts, in which he gloriously appears to be above all affliction and sorrow: and often gives them to triumph over the devil, and his powerful and cruel instruments. Many saints, by the influences of Christ's Spirit on their hearts, have rejoiced and triumphed, when suffering the greatest torments and cruelties of their persecutors. And in this work Christ sometimes gloriously appears above death, in carrying his people far above the fears of it, and making them to say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

4. Christ gloriously appears above all these forementioned evils, in his *glorifying* the souls of departed saints in heaven. In this he gives a glorious victory over death. Death by it is turned from an enemy into a servant; and their death, by the glorious change that passes in the state of their souls, is become a resurrection, rather than a death. Now Christ exalts the soul to a state of glory, wherein it is perfectly delivered from Satan and all his temptations, and all his instruments; and from all remains of sin and corruption, and from all affliction: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat—and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."*

5. Christ appears gloriously above these evils, in what he doth in his *providence* in the world, as head and redeemer of his church. He appears gloriously above Satan and all his instruments in upholding his church, even from its first establishment, through all the powerful attempts that have been made against it by earth and hell: hereby fulfilling his promise, "That the gates of hell should never prevail against it."†

Christ gloriously triumphed over these his enemies, in a remarkable success of his gospel, soon after his ascension, when many thousands in Jerusalem, and all parts of the world, were so soon turned from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God: and in causing his word to go on and prosper, and his church to increase and prevail against all the opposition of the Heathen world, when they united all their power to put a stop to it, and root it out. So that, in spite of all that the philosophers, and wise men, and emperors and princes could do, the gospel in a little time, overthrew Satan's old Heathenish kingdom in the whole Roman empire, which was then the main part of the world; and so brought about the greatest and most glorious revolution. Instead of

* Rev. vii. 16, 17. † Matt. xvi. 18.

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one single nation, now the greater part of the nations of the known world were become God's people.

And Christ's exaltation above all evil in his government of the world, in his providence, as the redeemer of his people, has since gloriously appeared in reviving his church by the reformation from Popery, after it had for many ages lain in a great measure hid, and dwelt in a wilderness, under Antichristian persecution.

And he will yet far more gloriously triumph over Satan and all his instruments, in all the mighty kingdoms that have been set up in opposition to the kingdom of Christ, at the time of the fall of Antichrist, and the beginning of those glorious times so much spoken of in scripture prophecy. "Then shall the stone that has been cut out without hands smite all these kingdoms, and break them to pieces; and they shall become like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind shall carry them away, that no place should be found for them; and the stone which smote them shall become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth."* "Then shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."† "And then the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."‡ Though great and mighty empires have been set up one after another in the world, in opposition to the kingdom of Christ, during the succession of so many ages; yet, Christ's kingdom shall be the last and the universal kingdom, which he has given him, as the heir of the world. Whatever great works Satan has wrought; the final issue and event of all, in the winding up of things in the last ages of the world, shall be the glorious kingdom of Christ through the world; a kingdom of righteousness and holiness, of love and peace, established every where. Agreeable to the ancient prediction, "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."§

Then shall Christ appear gloriously exalted indeed above

* Dan. ii. 34, 35. † Verse 44. ‡ Rev. xi. 15. § Dan. vii. 13, 14, 27.

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all evil: and then shall all the saints in earth and heaven gloriously triumph in him, and sing, "Hallelujah, salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. Hallelujah: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."*

6. Christ will appear gloriously above all evil in the *consummation* of the redemption of his elect church at the end of the world. Then will be completed the whole work of redemption with respect to all that Christ died for, both in its impetration and application; and not till then. And then will Christ's exaltation above all evil be most perfectly and fully manifest. Then shall the conquest and triumph be completed with respect to all of them. Then shall all the devils, and all their instruments, be brought before Christ, to be judged and condemned. And then shall be completed their destruction in their consummate and everlasting misery; when they shall be all cast into the lake of fire, no more to rage, and usurp dominion in the world; or have liberty to make opposition against God and Christ: they shall for ever be shut up, thenceforward only to suffer. Then shall death be totally destroyed. All the saints shall be delivered everlastingly from it. Even their bodies shall be taken from the power of death, by a glorious resurrection.

Then shall all guilt, and all sin and corruption, and all affliction, all sighs and tears, be utterly and eternally abolished, concerning every one of the elect; they being all brought to one complete body, to their consummate and immutable glory. And all this as the fruit of Christ's blood, and as an accomplishment of his redemption.

Then all that evil, which has so prevailed, and so exalted itself, and usurped and raged, and reigned, shall be perfectly and for ever thrust down and destroyed, with respect to all the elect; and all will be exalted to a state wherein they will be for ever immensely above all these things. "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."†

SECT. III.

The Subject improved and applied.

1. In this we may see how the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ appears in the work of redemption. It was because

* Rev. xix. 1, 2, 6. † Rev. xxi. 4.

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the Father had from eternity a design of exceedingly glorifying his Son, that he appointed him to be the person that should thus triumph over the evil in the world. The work of redemption is the most glorious of all God's works that are made known to us. The glory of God most remarkably shines forth in it. And this is one thing wherein its glory eminently appears, that therein Christ appears so gloriously above Satan and all his instruments; above all guilt, all corruption, all affliction, above death, and above all evil. And more especially, because evil hath so exalted itself in the world, as we have heard; and exalted itself against Christ in particular.

Satan has ever had a peculiar enmity against the Son of God. Probably his first rebellion, which was his condemnation, was his proudly taking it in disdain, when God declared the decree in heaven, that his Son, in man's nature, should be the king of heaven; and that all the angels should worship him. However that was, yet it is certain that his strife has ever been especially against the Son of God. The enmity has always been between the seed of the woman, and the serpent. And therefore that war which the devil maintains against God, is represented by the devil and his angels fighting against Michael and his angels.* This Michael is Christ.†

God had appointed his Son to be the heir of the world; but the devil has contested this matter with him, and has strove to set himself up as god of the world. And how exceedingly has the devil exalted himself against Christ! How did he oppose him as he dwelt among the Jews, in his tabernacle and temple! And how did he oppose him when on earth! And how has he opposed him since his ascension! What great and mighty works has Satan brought to pass in the world; how many Babels has he built up to heaven, in his opposition to the Son of God! How exceeding proud and haughty has he appeared in his opposition! How have he and his instruments, and sin, affliction, and death, of which he is the father, raged against Christ! But yet Christ, in the work of redemption, appears infinitely above them all. In this work he triumphs over them, however they have dealt proudly; and they all appear under his feet. In this the glory of the Son of God, in the work of redemption, remarkably appears.

The beauty of good appears with the greatest advantage, when compared with its contrary evil. And the glory of that which is excellent, then especially shews itself, when it triumphs over its contrary, and appears vastly above it, in its greatest height. The glory of Christ, in this glorious exaltation over so great evil, that so exalted itself against him,

* Rev. xii. 7. † Dan. x. 21, and xii. 1.

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the more remarkably appears, in that he is thus exalted out of so low a state. Though he appeared in the world as a little child; yet how does he triumph over the most gigantic enemies of God and men! He who was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," is a man of war, and triumphed over his enemies in all their power. He who was meek, and lowly of heart, has triumphed over those proud foes. And he is exalted over them all, in that which appears most despicable, even his cross.

2. Here is matter of exceeding great encouragement for all sinful miserable creatures in the world of mankind, to come to Christ. For let them be as sinful as they will, and ever so miserable; Christ, in the work of redemption, is gloriously exalted above all their sin and misery.

How high soever their guilt has risen, though mountains have been heaping on mountains all the days of their lives, till the pile appears towering up to heaven, and above the very stars; yet Christ in the work of redemption appears gloriously exalted above all this height.—Though they are overwhelmed in a mighty deluge of woe and misery; a deluge that is not only above their heads, but above the heads of the highest mountains; and they do not see how it is possible that they should escape; yet they have no reason to be discouraged from looking to Christ for help; who in the work of redemption, appears gloriously above the deluge of evil. Though they see dreadful corruption in their hearts; though their lusts appear like giants, or like the raging waves of the sea; yet they need not despair of help; but may look to Christ, who appears, in the work of redemption, gloriously above all this corruption.

If they apprehend themselves to be miserable captives of Satan; and find him too strong an adversary for them; and the devil is often tempting and buffeting them, and triumphing over them with great cruelty: if it seems to them that the devil has swallowed them up, and has got full possession of them, as the whale had of Jonah; yet there is encouragement for them to look again, as Jonah did towards God's holy temple, and to trust in Christ for deliverance from Satan, who appears so gloriously exalted above him in the work of redemption.

If they are ready to sink with darkness and sorrows, distress of conscience, or those frowns of God upon them; so that God's waves and billows seem to pass over them; yet they have encouragement enough to look to Christ for deliverance. These waves and billows have before exalted themselves against Christ; and he appeared to be infinitely above them.—And if they are afraid of death; if it looks exceeding terrible, as an enemy that would swallow them up; yet let

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them look to Christ who has appeared so gloriously above death; and their fears will turn into joy and triumph.

3. What cause have they who have an interest in Christ, to glory in their redeemer! They are often beset with many evils, and many mighty enemies surround them on every side, with open mouths ready to devour them: but they need not fear any of them. They may glory in Christ, the rock of their salvation, who appears so gloriously above them all. They may triumph over Satan, over this evil world, over guilt, and over death. For as their Redeemer is mighty, and is so exalted above all evil; so shall they also be exalted in him. They are now, in a sense, so exalted; for nothing can hurt them. Christ carries them, as on eagles' wings, high out of the reach of all evils, so that they cannot come near them, to do them any real harm. And, in a little time, they shall be carried so out of their reach, that they shall not be able even to molest them any more for ever.

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SERMON II.

SELF-FLATTERIES;

OR,

THE VAIN SELF-FLATTERIES OF THE SINNER.

PSAL. XXXVI. 2.

For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.

IN the foregoing verse, David says, "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes:" that is, when he saw that the wicked went on in sin, in an allowed way of wickedness, it convinced him, that they were not afraid of those terrible judgments, and of that wrath with which God hath threatened sinners. If the sinner were afraid of these, he could never go on so securely in sin as he doth.

It was a strange thing that men, who enjoyed such light as they did in the land of Israel, who read and heard those many awful threatenings which were written in the book of the law, should not be afraid to go on in sin. But, saith the Psalmist, *They flatter themselves in their own eyes:* they have something or other which they make a foundation of encouragement, whereby they persuade themselves that they shall escape those judgments; and that makes them put far away the evil day.

In this manner the sinner proceeds, *until his iniquity be found to be hateful;* that is, until he finds by experience that it is a more dreadful thing to sin against God, and break his holy commands, than he imagined. He thinks sin to be sweet, and hides it as a sweet morsel under his tongue; he loves it

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and flatters himself in it, till at length he finds by experience, that it is bitter as gall and wormwood. Though he thinks the commission of sin to be lovely, yet he will find the fruit of it to be hateful, and what he cannot endure. Prov. xxiii. 32. "At last it will bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder."

Here observe, the subject spoken of is the *wicked man*, of whom the Psalmist had been speaking in the foregoing verse. His action in *flattering himself in his own eyes*; i. e. he makes himself and his case to appear to himself, or in his own eyes, better than it is.

How long he continues so to do, *until his iniquity be found to be hateful.* Which may be taken for, either, his *sin itself*, as the wicked will see how odious sin is to God, when he shall feel the effects of his hatred, and how hateful to angels and saints; or, rather, the *cause* is here put for the effect, the tree for its fruit, and he will find his iniquity to be hateful, as he will find the hatefulness and feel the terribleness of the *fruit* of his iniquity. Hence it appears, that *Wicked men generally flatter themselves with hopes of escaping punishment, till it actually comes upon them.*

There are but few sinners who despair, who give up the cause, and conclude within themselves, that they shall go to hell; yet there are but few who do not go to hell. It is to be feared that men go to hell every day out of this country; yet very few of them suffer themselves to believe, that they are in any great danger of that punishment. They go on sinning, and thus travelling in the direct road to the pit; yet they persuade themselves that they shall never fall into it.

SECT. I.

Sinners flatter themselves with the hope of impunity.

We are so taught in the word of God, Deut. xxix. 18, 19. "Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God. Lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood, and it come to pass when he heareth the words of this curse, that he *bless himself in his heart*, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst." Where it is supposed, that they whose hearts turn away from God, and are roots that bear gall and wormwood, generally bless themselves in their hearts, saying, *We shall have peace.*

See also Psalm xlix. 17, 18. "When he dieth, he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him, though, whilst he lived, he *blessed his soul.*" And Psalm l. 21.

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"These things thou hast done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes."

It is very evident, that sinners flatter themselves that they shall escape punishment, otherwise they would be in dreadful and continual distress; they could never live so cheerfully as they now do. Their lives would be filled with sorrow and mourning, and they would be in continual uneasiness and distress, as much as those that are exercised with some violent pain of body. But it is apparent that men are careless and secure; they are not much concerned about future punishment, and they cheerfully pursue their business and recreations. Therefore they undoubtedly *flatter* themselves, that they shall not be eternally miserable in hell, as they are threatened in the word of God.

It is evident that they flatter themselves with hopes that they shall escape punishment, otherwise they would certainly be restrained, at least from many of those sins in which they now live; they would not proceed in wilful courses of sin. The transgression of the wicked convinced the Psalmist, and is enough to convince every one, that there is no fear of God before his eyes, and that he flatters himself in his own eyes. It would be impossible for men allowedly to do those very things which they know are threatened with everlasting destruction, if they did not some way encourage themselves they should nevertheless escape that destruction.

SECT. II.

Some of the various Ways wherein Sinners flatter themselves in their own Eyes.

1. Some flatter themselves with a secret hope, that there is no such thing as *another world*. They hear a great deal of preaching, and a great deal of talk about hell, and the eternal judgment; but those things do not seem to them to be real. They never saw hell, nor the devils and damned spirits; and therefore are ready to say within themselves, How do I know that there is any such thing as another world? When the beasts die, there is an end of them, and how do I know but that it will be so with me! Perhaps all these things are nothing but the inventions of men, nothing but cunningly-devised fables.

Such thoughts are apt to rise in the minds of sinners, and the devil sets in to enforce them. Such thoughts are an ease to them; therefore they *wish* they were true, and that

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makes them the more ready to think that they *are* so. So that they are hardened in the way of sin, by infidelity and atheistical thoughts. Psalm xiv. 1. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Psalm xciv. 6, 7. "They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless. Yet they say, The Lord shall not see; neither shall the God of Jacob regard it."

2. Some flatter themselves that *death* is a great way off, and that they shall hereafter have much opportunity to seek salvation; and they think, if they earnestly seek it, though it be a great while hence, they shall obtain. Although they see no reason to conclude that they shall live long, and perhaps they do not positively conclude that they shall; yet it doth not come into their minds that their lives are really uncertain, and that it is doubtful whether they will live another year. Such a thought as this doth not take any hold of them. And although they do not absolutely determine that they shall live to old age or to middle age, yet they secretly flatter themselves with such an imagination. They are disposed to believe so, they act upon it, and run the venture.

Men believe that things will be as they choose to have them, without reason, and sometimes without the appearance of reason, as is most apparent in this case. Psal. xlix. 11. "Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names."—The prepossession and desire of men to have it so, is the principal thing that makes them so believe. However, there are several other things which they use as arguments to flatter themselves. Perhaps they think, that since they are at present in health, or in youth, or that since they are useful men, do a great deal of good, and both themselves and others pray for the continuance of their lives; they are not likely to be removed by death very soon.—If they live many years in the world, they think it very probable that they shall be converted before they die: as they expect hereafter to have much more convenient opportunities to become converted, than they have now. And by some means or other they think they shall get through their work before they arrive at old age.

3. Some flatter themselves that they lead *moral* and orderly lives, and therefore think that they shall not be damned. They think within themselves that they live not in any vice, that they take care to wrong no man, are just and honest dealers; that they are not addicted to hard drinking, or to uncleanness, or to bad language; that they keep the Sabbath strictly, are constant attendants on the public worship, and maintain the worship of God in their families. Therefore

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they hope that God will not cast them into hell. They see not why God should be so angry with them as that would imply, seeing they are so orderly and regular in their walk! they see not that they have done enough to anger him to that degree. And if they have angered him, they imagine they have also done a great deal to pacify him.

If they be not as yet converted, and it be necessary that they should experience any other conversion in order to their salvation, they hope that their orderly and strict lives will move God to give them converting grace. They hope that surely God will not see those that live as they do go to hell. Thus they flatter themselves, as those (Luke xviii. 9,) "that trusted in themselves that they were righteous."

4. Some make [the *advantages* under which they live an occasion of self-flattery. They flatter themselves, that they live in a place where the gospel is powerfully preached, and among a religious people, where many have been converted; and they think it will be much easier for them to be saved on that account. Thus they abuse the grace of God to their destruction; they do that which the scriptures call *despising the riches of God's goodness;* Rom. ii. 4. "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

Some flatter themselves, that they are born of godly parents, who are dear to God, who have often and earnestly prayed for them, and hope that their prayers will be heard; and that encourages them to go on in the way of neglecting their souls. The Jews had great dependence upon this, that they were the children of Abraham; John viii. 33, they make their boast, "We be Abraham's seed;" and in verse 39, "Abraham is our father."

5. Some flatter themselves with their own *intentions.* They intend to give themselves liberty for a while longer, and *then* to reform. Though now they neglect their souls, and are going on in sin; yet they intend ere long to bestir themselves, to leave off their sins, and to set themselves to seek God. They hear that there is great encouragement for those who earnestly seek God, that they shall find him. So they intend to do; they propose to seek with a great deal of earnestness. They are told, that there are many who seek to enter the kingdom of heaven, who shall not be able; but they intend, not only to seek, but *to strive.* However, for the present they allow themselves in their ease, sloth, and pleasure, minding only earthly things.

Or if they should be seized with some mortal distemper, and should draw near to the grave, before the time which they lay out in their minds for reformation, they think how

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earnestly they would pray and cry to God for mercy! and as they hear God is a merciful God, who taketh no delight in the death of sinners, they hence flatter themselves that they shall move God to have pity on them.

There are but few sinners, knowing themselves to be such, who have not intentions of future repentance and reformation; but few who do not flatter themselves, that they shall in good earnest seek God some time or other. Hell is full of *good intenders*, who never proved to be *true performers:* Acts xxiv. 25. "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

6. There are some who flatter themselves, that they *do*, and have *done*, a great deal for their salvation, and therefore hope they shall obtain; when indeed they neither do what they ought to do, nor what they might do even in their present state of unregeneracy; nor are they in any likely way to be converted. They think they are striving, when they actually neglect many moral and some instituted duties; nor do they exert themselves as if it were for their lives; they are not *violent* for the kingdom of heaven.

There are doubtless many such; many are concerned, and are seeking, and do many things, and think that they are in a very fair way to obtain the kingdom of God; yet there is great danger that they will prove at last to be some of the foolish virgins, and be found without oil in their vessels.

7. Some hope by their strivings to obtain salvation *of themselves*. They have a secret imagination, that they shall by degrees, work in themselves sorrow and repentance of sin, and love towards God and Jesus Christ. Their striving is not so much an earnest seeking to God, as a striving to do themselves that which is the work of God. Many who are now seeking have this imagination; they labour, read, pray, hear sermons, and go to private meetings, with the view of making themselves holy, and of working in themselves holy affections.

Many, who only project and design to turn to God hereafter, are apt to think that it is an easy thing to be converted; that it is a thing which will be in their own power at any time, when they shall earnestly set themselves to it.

8. Some sinners flatter themselves, that they are *already* converted. They sit down and rest in a false hope, persuading themselves that all their sins are pardoned: that God loves them; that they shall go to heaven when they die; and that they need trouble themselves no more: Rev. iii. 17. "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

Sinners very generally go on flattering themselves in some

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or other of these ways, till their punishment actually overtakes them. These are the baits by which Satan catches souls, and draws them into his snare. They are such self-flatteries as these that keep men from seeing their danger, and that make them go on securely, "as the bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life."

Those that flatter themselves with hopes of living a great while longer in the world, very commonly continue to do so till death comes. Death comes upon them when they expect it not; they look upon it as a great way off, when there is but a step between. They thought not of dying at that time, nor at any time near it. When they were young, they proposed to live a good while longer; and if they happen to live till middle age, they still maintain the same thought, that they are not yet near death; and so that thought goes along with them as long as they live, or till they are just about to die.

Men often have a dependence on their own righteousness, and as long as they live are never brought off from it. Multitudes uphold themselves with their own intentions, till all their prospects are dashed in pieces by death. They put off the work which they have to do till such a time; and when that comes, they put it off to another time; until death, which cannot be put off, overtakes them. There are many also that hold a false hope, a persuasion that they belong to God; and as long as they live, by all the marks and signs which are given of a true convert, they never will be persuaded to let go their hope, till it is rent from them by death.

Thus men commonly uphold themselves, and make themselves easy, till hell-fire makes them uneasy. Everlasting ruin comes upon them as a snare, and all their hopes are at once cut off, and turned into everlasting despair: 1 Thess. v. 3. "When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

SECT. III.

The Subject applied.

1. Hence we learn one reason why there are but few saved, and why so many perish from under the gospel. All men know that they must die, and all that sit under the light of the gospel have been told many a time, that after this there is another world; that there are but two states in that other world—a state of eternal happiness, and a state of eternal misery—that there is but one way of escaping the misery and

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obtaining the blessedness of eternity, which is by obtaining an interest in Christ, through faith in him; and that this life is the only opportunity of obtaining an interest in Christ. Yet men are so much given to flatter themselves in those ways which we have mentioned, that there are but few that seasonably take care of their salvation. Indeed they cannot but be in some measure concerned about their souls; yet they flatter themselves with one thing or other, so that they are kept steadily and uninterruptedly going on in the broad way to destruction.

2. Hence we learn the reason why awakening truths of scripture, and awakening sermons, make no more impression upon men. It is in itself a wonderful and surprising thing, that God's denunciations of eternal misery, and threatenings of casting sinners into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever and ever, do not affect them, do not startle them. The truth is, they *flatter* themselves, by such means as we have mentioned, that this dreadful misery is not for *them*; that *they* shall escape it, though multitudes of others are involved in it. They take not these threatenings to themselves; they seem to think that they do not belong to them.

How many are there, who, for all the awakening sermons they have heard, are yet secure in sin! and who, although they are sensible that they are in a Christless condition, and are still going on in sin, yet intend to go to heaven, and expect that by some means or other they shall arrive there. They are often told, that God is very angry with them: yet they think God is a very merciful God, and they shall be able to pacify him. If they be told how uncertain life is, *that* doth not awaken them, because they flatter themselves with long life. If they be told how dangerous it is to delay the business of religion, they promise themselves, that they will hereafter engage in it with more earnestness than others, and so obtain the end, the salvation of their souls. Others, when they are told that many shall seek who shall not be able to obtain, think, surely, that *they*, having done so much for salvation, shall not be denied.

3. Let every sinner examine, whether he do not flatter himself in some of those ways which have been mentioned. What is it in your own minds which makes you think it is safe for you to delay turning to God? What is it that encourages you to run such a venture as you do, by delaying this necessary work? Is it that you hope there is no such state as heaven or hell, and have a suspicion that there is no God? Is it this that makes you secure? or is it that you are not much afraid but that you shall have opportunity enough a great while hence to mind such things? Is it an intention of a future seeking at a more convenient season? and are you persuaded

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that God will hearken to you then, after you shall have so long turned a deaf ear to his commands and gracious invitations? Are you encouraged to commit sin, because you hope to repent of it? Are you encouraged by the mercy of God to be his enemies? and do you resolve still to provoke him to anger, because you think he is easily pacified?

Or do you think that your conversion is in your own power, and that you can turn to God when you please? Is it because you have been born of godly parents, that you are so secure? or do you imagine that you are in a fair way to be converted? Do you think that what you have done in religion will engage God to pity you, and that he never can have the heart to condemn one who has lived in so orderly a manner? or do you think that you are indeed converted already? and doth that encourage you to take a liberty in sinning? Or are you secure, because you are so stupid as to think nothing about these things? Do you let these concerns wholly alone, and scarcely ever think at all how it will be with you after you are dead?—Certainly it must be one or more of these things which keeps you in your security, and encourages you to go on in sin. Examine, therefore, and see which of them it is.

4. Be persuaded to leave off thus flattering yourselves in your own eyes. You are here informed, that those who do as you do, commonly continue so doing till their punishment actually comes upon them. Thereby you may be convinced of the vanity of all such flatteries. Be afraid of that which you are sure is the devil's bait: "Surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird." Prov. i. 17.

You are not only told in the scriptures, that sinners are generally thus allured to hell, but your own reason may convince you that it is so. For doubtless other sinners have as much ground to hope an escape of punishment as you; and it is evident, that they generally do hope to escape. Men under the gospel almost universally think they shall not go to hell; if it were otherwise, they could have no peace or comfort in the world. Yet what multitudes have we reason to conclude go down from under the preaching of the gospel to the pit of destruction! Now, this is surely enough to convince any sober, prudent person, of the folly of such flattery, and of the folly of every one that doth not immediately set about this great work with his might. If you could have access to the damned, you would hear many of them curse themselves, for thus flattering themselves while they lived in this world; and you would have the same doctrine preached to you by their wailings and yellings which is now delivered to you.

If your temptation to security be unbelief of the funda-

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mental doctrines of religion, such as the being of God, of another world, and an eternal judgment, you may consider, that though that makes you secure at present, yet it will not do always, it will not stand by you when you come to die. The fool often in health saith, *There is no God;* but when he comes to die, he cannot rest in any such supposition. Then he is generally so much convinced in his own conscience, that there is a God, that he is in dreadful amazement for fear of his eternal wrath. It is folly, therefore, to flatter yourselves with any supposition now, which you will not then be able to hold. If you depend on long-life, consider how many who have depended on the same thing, and had as much reason to depend on it as you, have died within your remembrance.

Is it because you are outwardly of an orderly life and conversation, that you think you shall be saved? How unreasonable is it to suppose, that God should be so obliged by those actions, which he knows are not done from the least respect or regard to him, but wholly with a private view! Is it because you are under great advantages that you are not much afraid but that you shall some time or other be converted, and therefore neglect yourselves and your spiritual interests? And were not the people of Bethsaida, Chorazin, and Capernaum, under as great advantages as you, when Christ himself preached the gospel to them, almost continually, and wrought such a multitude of miracles among them? Yet he says, that it shall be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah, than for those cities.

Do you expect you shall be saved, however you neglect yourselves, because you were born of godly parents? Hear what Christ saith, Matt. iii. 9. "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father." Do you flatter yourselves that you shall obtain mercy, though others do not, because you intend hereafter to seek it more earnestly than others? Yet you deceive yourselves, if you think that you intend better than many of those others, or better than many who are now in hell once intended.

If you think you are in a way of earnest seeking, consider, whether or no you do not mind other things yet more? If you imagine that you have it in your own power to work yourselves up to repentance, consider, that you must assuredly give up that imagination, before you can have repentance wrought in you. If you think yourselves already converted, and that encourages you to give yourselves the greater liberty in sinning, this is a certain sign that you are not converted.

Wherefore abandon all these ways of flattering yourselves; no longer follow the devil's bait; and let nothing encourage you to go on in sin; but immediately and henceforth seek God with all your heart, and soul, and strength.

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SERMON III.

DISHONESTY;

OR,

THE SIN OF THEFT AND OF INJUSTICE.

EXOD. XX. 15.

Thou shalt not steal.

THIS is one of the ten commandments, which constitute a summary of man's duty as revealed by God. God made many revelations to the children of Israel in the wilderness by Moses: but this made in the ten commandments is the chief. Most of those other revelations, contained ceremonial or judicial laws; but this contains the moral law. The most of those other laws respected the Jewish nation; but here is a summary of laws binding on all mankind. Those were to last till Christ should come, and have set up the Christian church; these are of perpetual obligation, and last to the end of the world. God every where, by Moses and the prophets, manifests a far greater regard to the duties of these commands, than to any of the rites of the ceremonial law.

These commands were given at Mount Sinai, before any of the precepts of the ceremonial or judicial laws. They were delivered by a great voice out of the midst of fire, which made all the people in the camp tremble, and afterwards were engraven on tables of stone, and laid up in the ark; the first table containing the four first commandments, which teach our duty to God; the second table containing the six last, which teach our duty to man. The sum of the duties of the first table is contained in that which Christ

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says is the first and great commandment of the law; Matt. xxii. 37. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." The sum of what is required in the second table, is what Christ calls the second command, like unto the first; verse 39. "The second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Of the commands of this second table of the law, the first, (which is the *fifth* of the ten,) refers to that *honour* which is due to our neighbour; the second respects his *life;* the third his *chastity;* the fourth his *estate;* the fifth his good *name;* the sixth and last respects his *possessions* and enjoyments in general. It is that command which respects our neighbour's *estate*, and which is the fourth command of the second table, and the eighth of the whole decalogue, on which I am now to insist: and here I shall make the command itself, as the words of it lie before us in the decalogue, my subject: and as the words of the commandment are in the form of a prohibition, forbidding a certain kind of sin; so I shall consider particularly what it is that this command forbids. The sin that is forbidden in this command is called *stealing;* yet we cannot reasonably understand it only of that act, which in the more ordinary and strict sense of the word, is called stealing. But the iniquity which this command forbids, may be summarily expressed thus:—*An unjust usurping of our neighbour's property, without his consent.*

So much is doubtless comprehended in the text; yet this comprehends much more than is implied in the ordinary use of the word, *stealing;* which is only a secret taking of that which is another's, from his possession, without either his consent or knowledge. But the ten commands are not to be limited to the strictest sense of the words, but are to be understood in such a latitude, as to include all things that are of that nature or kind. Hence Christ reproves the Pharisees' interpretation of the sixth command, Matt. v. 21, 22; and also their interpretation of the seventh command; see verse 27, 28; by which it appears that the commands are not to be understood as forbidding only these individual sins which are expressly mentioned, in the strictest sense of the expressions; but all other things of the same nature or kind.—Therefore, what is forbidden in this command is all unjust usurpation of our neighbour's property. Here it may be observed, that an unjust usurpation of our neighbour's property is twofold; it may be, either by *withholding* what is our neighbour's, or, by *taking* it from him.

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SECT. I.

The dishonesty of withholding what is our neighbour's.

THERE are many ways in which persons may unjustly usurp their neighbour's property, by withholding what is his due; but I shall particularise only two things.

1. The unfaithfulness of men in *not fulfilling their engagements*. Ordinarily when men promise any thing to their neighbour, or enter into engagements by undertaking any business with which their neighbour entrusts them, their engagements invest their neighbour with a right to that which is engaged; so that if they withhold it, they usurp that which belongs to their neighbour. So, when men break their promises, because they find them to be inconvenient, and they cannot fulfil them without difficulty and trouble; or merely because they have altered their minds since they promised; they think they have not consulted their own interest in the promise which they have made, and that if they had considered the matter as much before they promised as they have since, they should not have promised. Therefore they take the liberty to set their own promises aside. Besides, sometimes persons violate this command, by neglecting to fulfil their engagements, through a careless, negligent spirit.

They violate this command, in withholding what belongs to their neighbour, when they are not faithful in any business which they have undertaken to do for their neighbour. If their neighbour have hired them to labour for him for a certain time, and they be not careful well to husband the time; if they be hired to a day's labour, and be not careful to improve the day, as they have reason to think that he who hired justly expected of them; or if they be hired to accomplish such a piece of work, and be not careful to do it well, do it not as if it were for themselves, or as they would have others do for them, when they in like manner betrust them with any business of their's; or if they be entrusted with any particular affair, which they undertake, but use not that care, contrivance, and diligence, to manage it so as will be to the advantage of him who entrusts them, and as they would manage it, or would insist that it should be managed, if the affair were their own: in all these cases they unjustly withhold what belongs to their neighbour.

2. Another way in which men unjustly withhold what is their neighbour's, is *in neglecting to pay their debts*. Sometimes this happens, because they run so far into debt that they cannot reasonably hope to be able to pay their debts; and this they do, either through pride and affectation of living

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above their circumstances: or through a grasping, covetous disposition, or some other corrupt principle. Sometimes they neglect to pay their debts from carelessness of spirit about it, little concerning themselves whether they are paid or not, taking no care to go to their creditor, or to send to him; and if they see him from time to time, they say nothing about their debts. Sometimes they neglect to pay their debts, because it would put them to some inconvenience. The reason why they do it not, is not because they cannot do it, but because they cannot do it so conveniently as they desire; and so they rather choose to put their creditor to inconvenience by being without what properly belongs to him, than to put themselves to inconvenience by being without what doth not belong to them, and what they have no right to detain. In any of these cases they unjustly usurp the property of their neighbour.

Sometimes persons have that by them with which they could pay their debts if they would; but they want to lay out their money for something else, to buy gay clothing for their children, or to advance their estates, or for some such end. They have other designs in hand, which must fail, if they pay their debts. When men thus withhold what is due, they unjustly usurp what is not their own. Sometimes they neglect to pay their debts, and their excuse for it is, that their creditor doth not need it; that he hath a plentiful estate, and can well bear to lay out of his money. But if the creditor be ever so rich, that gives no right to the debtor to withhold from him that which belongs to him. If it be due, it ought to be paid: for that is the very notion of its being due. It is no more lawful to withhold from a man what is his due, without his consent, because he is rich and able to do without it, than it is lawful to steal from a man because he is rich, and able to bear the loss.

SECT. II.

The dishonesty of unjustly taking a neighbour's property.

The principal ways of doing this seem to be these four, by negligence, by fraud, by violence, or by stealing, strictly so called.

1. The first way of unjustly depriving our neighbour of that which is his, is by *negligence*, by carelessly neglecting that which is expected by neighbours, one of another, and is necessary to prevent our neighbour's suffering in his estate by us, or by any thing that is ours: and necessary in order that neighbours may live one by another, without

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suffering in their lawful interests, rights, and possessions, one by another.

For instance, when proper care is not taken by men to prevent their neighbour's suffering in the produce of his fields or inclosures, from their cattle, or other brute creatures; which may be either through negligence with regard to their creatures themselves, in keeping those that are unruly, and giving them their liberty, though they know that they are not fit to have their liberty, and are commonly wont to break into their neighbour's inclosures, greatly to his damage; or through a neglect of that which is justly expected of them, to defend others' fields from suffering by the neighbourhood of their own. In such cases men are guilty of unjustly taking from their neighbour what is his property.

It is said in the law of Moses, (Exod. xxii. 5,) "If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field; of the best of his own field, and of the best of his vineyard, shall he make restitution." Now a man may be unjustly the cause of his neighbour's field or vineyard being eaten, either by putting in his beast, and so doing what he should not do; or by neglecting to do what he should do, to prevent his beast from getting into his field. What is said in the 144th Psalm, and two last verses, supposes that a people who carry themselves as becomes a people whose God is the Lord, will take thorough care that beasts do not break into their neighbour's inclosures: "That our oxen may be strong to labour; that there be *no breaking in*, nor *going out*; that there be no complaining in our streets. Happy is that people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord."

2. Taking away that which is our neighbour's by *fraud*, or by deceiving him, is another mode of usurping our neighbour's property. This is the case when men in their dealings take advantage of their neighbour's ignorance, or oversight, or mistake, to get something from him; or when they make their gains, by concealing the defects of what they sell, putting off bad for good, though this be not done by speaking falsely, but only by keeping silence; or when they take a higher price than what they sell is really worth, and more than they could get for it if the concealed defects were known: or when they sell that for good, which indeed is not merchantable, which is condemned in Amos viii. 6. "Yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat."

If a man puts off something to another with defects that are concealed, knowing that the other receives it as good, and pays such a price for it, under a notion of its having no remarkable defect but what he sees, and takes the price which the buyer under that notion offers; the seller knows that he

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takes a price of the buyer for that which the buyer had not of him; for the buyer is deceived, and pays for those things which he finds wanting in what he buys. It is just the same thing, as if a man should take a payment that another offers him, through a mistake, for that which he never had of him, thinking that he had it of him, when he had it not.

So a man fraudulently takes away that which is his neighbour's, when he gets his money from him by falsely commending what he hath to sell, above what he knows to be the true quality of it; and attributes those good qualities to it which he knows it has not: or if he does not that, yet sets forth the good qualities in a degree beyond what he knows to be the true degree; or speaks of the defects and ill qualities of what he has to sell, as if they were much less than he knows they are: or on the contrary, when the buyer will cry down what he is about to buy, contrary to his real opinion of the value of it.—These things, however common they may be in men's dealings one with another, are nothing short of iniquity, and *fraud*, and a great breach of this commandment, upon which we are discoursing. Prov. xx. 14. "It is nought, it is nought, saith the buyer; but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth."—Many other ways there are whereby men deceive one another in their trading, and whereby they fraudulently and unjustly take away that which is their neighbour's.

3. Another mode of unjustly invading and taking away our neighbour's property, is by *violence*. This violence may be done in different degrees.—Men may take away their neighbour's goods either by mere open violence, either making use of superior strength, forcibly taking away any thing that is his; or by express or implicit threatenings forcing him to yield up what he has into their hands; as is done in open robbery and piracy. Or, by making use of some advantages which they have over their neighbour, in their dealings with him, constrain him to yield to their gaining unreasonably of him; as when they take advantage of their neighbour's poverty to extort unreasonably from him for those things that he is under a necessity of procuring for himself or family. This is an oppression against which God hath shewn a great displeasure in his word. Levit. xxv. 14. "And if thou sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest ought of thy neighbour, ye shall not oppress one another." Prov. xxii. 22, 23. "Rob not the poor, because he is poor, neither oppress the afflicted in the gate; for the Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them." And, Amos iv. 1, 2. "Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mount of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy; the Lord hath sworn in his holiness, that he will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fish-hooks."

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When the necessity of poor indigent people is the very thing whence others take occasion to raise the price of provisions, even above the market; this is such an oppression. There are many poor people whose families are in such necessity of bread, that they in their extremity will give almost any price for it, rather than go without it. Those who have to sell, though hereby they have an advantage in their hands, yet surely should not take the advantage to raise the price of provisions. We should doubtless think that we had just cause to complain, if we were in such necessity as they are, and were reduced to their straits, and were treated in this manner; and let us remember, that it is owing only to the distinguishing goodness of God to us, that we are not in their circumstances; and whatever our present circumstances are, yet we know not but that the time may still come when their case may be ours.

Men may oppress others, though they be not poor, if they will take advantage of any particular necessities of their neighbour, unreasonably to extort from him. The case may be so at particular seasons, that those who are not poor, may stand in particular and extraordinary need of what we have, or what we can do for them; so that it would be greatly to their disadvantage or loss to be without it. Now to take advantage of their urgent circumstances, to get from them an unreasonable price, is a violent dealing with our neighbours.

It is very unreasonable to say, Such men are so rich, and get money so much more easily than I, that it is no hurt for me to take advantage when they are in special need, and make them give me, for work that I do for them, a great deal more than I would desire to ask of other men. Let such consider, whether, if they should by any means hereafter get forward in the world, and come to have plentiful estates, they would like that persons should act upon such principles towards them. That men are rich, gives us no more right to take away from them what is theirs in this way, than it does to steal from them because they come easily by their property, and can do without it better than we.

Again, another thing that is a kind of violent taking from our neighbour what is his, is taking the advantage of the law to gain from others, when their cause in honesty and conscience is just and good. The circumstances of mankind, their rights, possessions, and dealings one with another, are so various, that it is impossible that any body of human laws, should be contrived to suit all possible cases and circumstances. Hence the best laws may be abused and perverted to purposes contrary to the general design of laws, which is to maintain the rights and secure the properties of mankind. Human laws have a regard due to them, but always in subordination to the

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higher laws of God and nature. Therefore when it so happens, that we have an advantage by the law, to gain what the laws of moral honesty allow not, it is an oppression and violence to take the advantage. That human laws allow it, will not excuse us before God, the Judge of the world, who will judge us another day by his own laws, and not by the laws of the commonwealth.

4. The fourth way of unjustly taking from our neighbour that which is his, is *stealing*, so called. All unjust ways of taking away, or invading, or usurping what is our neighbour's, are called stealing in the most extensive use of the word, and all is included in the expression in this command. Yet the word stealing, as it is more commonly used, is not of so great extent, and intends not all unjust invasion of our neighbour's property, but only a particular kind of unjust taking. So that in common speech when we speak of fraudulent dealings, of extortion, unfaithfulness in our trust, and of stealing, we understand different sins by these expressions, though they are an usurpation of what is our neighbour's.

Stealing, strictly so called, may be thus defined, *A designed taking of our neighbour's goods from him without his consent or knowledge.* It is not merely withholding of what is our neighbour's, but a taking away: and therein it differs from unfaithfulness in our undertakings and betrustments, and also from negligence in the payment of debts. It is a designed or wilful depriving of our neighbour of what is his, and so differs from wronging our neighbour in his estate through carelessness or negligence. It is a taking of our neighbour's goods without his knowledge; it is a private clandestine taking away, and so differs from robbery by open violence.

So also it differs from extortion: for in that the person knows what is taken from him. The aim of him that takes is no other than that he should know it; for he makes use of other means than his ignorance, to obtain what is his neighbour's, *viz.* violence to constrain him to give it up. So also it differs from fraudulent dealing or trading. For though in fraudulent dealing the lawful possessor doth not understand the way and means, by which he parts with his goods, and by which his neighbour becomes possessed of them; yet he knows the *fact:* The deceiver designedly conceives the *manner* only. But in stealing, strictly so called, he that takes, intends not that it shall be *known* that he takes. It also differs from extortion and fraudulent dealing, in that it is wholly without the consent of the owner. For in extortion, though there be no free consent; yet the consent of the owner is in some sort gained, though by oppressive means. So in fraudulent dealing consent is in some sort obtained, though it be by deceit. But in stealing no kind of consent is obtained.

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A person may steal from another, yet not take his goods without the knowledge of the owner; because he may know of it accidentally, he may see what is done, unawares to the thief. Therefore I have defined stealing, a designed taking without the consent or knowledge of the owner. If it be accidentally known, yet it is not known in the design and intention of the thief. The thief is so far at least private in it, that he gives no notice to the owner at the time. It must be also without the consent of the owner. A person may take without the knowledge of the owner, and yet not take without his consent. The owner may not know of his taking at the time, or of his taking any particular things; yet there may be his implicit consent. There may have been a general consent, if not expressed, yet implied. The circumstances of the affair may be such, that his consent may well be presumed upon, either from an established custom, allowed by all, or from the nature of the case; the thing being of such a nature, that it may well be presumed that none would refuse their consent; as in the case of a person's accidentally passing through his neighbour's vineyard in Israel, and eating his fill of grapes: or from the circumstances of the persons, as is the case, in many instances, of the freedom which near neighbours and intimate friends often take, and of that boldness which they use with respect to each other's goods.

In all *such* cases, though the owner do not particularly know what is done, yet he that takes, does it not with any contrived, designed concealment. And though there is no express, particular consent, yet there is a consent either implied, or justly presumed upon; and he that takes, doth not designedly do it without consent.

It may happen in some cases, that one may take the goods of another both without his knowledge and consent, either explicit or implicit, but through mistake; yet he may not be guilty of stealing. Therefore the *design* of him who takes must come into consideration. When he designedly takes away that which is his neighbour's, without his consent or knowledge, then he steals. So that if it should happen, that he has both his consent and knowledge, without his design, he steals. And if it so happen that he takes without either his neighbour's consent or knowledge, and yet without his own design, he steals not. I desire therefore that this, which I take to be the true definition of theft or stealing, may be borne in mind, viz. A designed taking of our neighbour's goods, without his consent or knowledge; because it is needful to clear up many things which I have yet to say on this subject.

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SECT. III.

Dishonest Excuses.

Here I shall particularly take notice of some things, by which persons may be ready to excuse themselves, in privately taking their neighbour's goods, which however cannot be a just excuse for it, nor will they make such a taking not to be stealing.

1. That the person whose goods are privately taken, *owes* or is in debt to him that takes them. Some may be ready to say that they do not take that which is their neighbour's, they take that which is their own, because as much is due to them, their neighbour owes them as much, and unjustly detains it, and they know not whether ever they shall get their due of him. Their neighbour will not do them right, and therefore they must right themselves.

But such pleas as these will not justify a man in going in a private and clandestine manner to take away any thing of his neighbour's from his possession, without his consent or knowledge; his doing this is properly stealing. For though something of his neighbour's, which is as valuable as what he takes, may be due to him; that doth not give him such a right to his neighbour's goods, that he may take any thing that is his, according to his own pleasure, and at what time, and in what manner he pleases. That his neighbour is in debt to him, doth not give him a right to take it upon himself to be his own judge, so that he may judge for himself, which of his neighbour's goods shall be taken from him to discharge the debt; and that he may act merely according to his own private judgment and pleasure in such a case, without so much as acquainting his neighbour with the affair.

In order to warrant such a proceeding as this, every thing that his neighbour has, must be his. A man may not take indifferently what he pleases out of a number of goods, without the consent or knowledge of any other person, unless all is his own, to be disposed of as he pleases. Such a way of using goods according to our own pleasure, taking what we will, and at what time we will, can be warranted by nothing but a dominion over the whole. And though he who is in debt may be guilty of great injustice in detaining what is due to another; yet it doth not thence follow, but that he that takes from him, may also be guilty of great injustice towards him. The course he takes to right himself may be very irregular and unreasonable; and such a course, that if universally allowed

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and pursued in such cases, would throw human society into confusion.

When men obtain a property in any of the professions of this life, they are at the same time also invested with a right to retain a possession of them, till they are deprived of them in some fair and regular proceeding. Every man has a right to hold his estate, and keep possession of his properties, so that no other can lawfully use them as his own, until he either parts with them of his own accord, or until it be taken from him according to some established rule, in a way of open justice. Therefore he who, under pretence of having just demands upon his neighbour, privately takes his goods without his consent, takes them unjustly, and is guilty of stealing.

2. Much less will it make such a private taking not to be stealing, that he who takes, has, in way of kindness or gift, done for the person from whom he takes, as much as is equivalent to the *value* of what he takes. If a man do his neighbour some considerable kindness, whether in labour, or in something that he gives him, what he does or gives is supposed to be done voluntarily, and he is not to make his neighbour debtor for it; and therefore if any thing be privately taken away, upon any such consideration, it is gross stealing.

For instance, when any person needs to have any services done for him, where a considerable number of hands are necessary; it is common for the neighbourhood to meet together and join in helping their neighbour, and frequently some provision is made for their entertainment. If any person who hath assisted on such an occasion, and is a partaker at such an entertainment, shall think within himself, the service I have done is worth a great deal more than what I shall eat and drink here, and therefore shall take liberty privately to take of the provision set before him, to carry away with him, purposely concealing the matter from him who hath entertained him, this is gross stealing; and it is a very ridiculous plea which they make to excuse so unmanly and vile an act.

Persons in such cases may say to themselves, that the provision is made for them, and set before them; that it is a time wherein considerable liberty is given, and they think, seeing they have done so much for their host, they may take something more than they eat and drink there. But then let them be open in it; let them acquaint those with it who make the entertainment; and let it not be done in any wise, in a secret, clandestine manner, with the least design or attempt to avoid their notice; on the contrary, let care be taken to give them notice and obtain their consent.

When persons do such things in a private manner, they

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condemn themselves by their own act; their doing what they do secretly, shews that they are conscious to themselves, that they go beyond what it is expected they should do, and do what would not be allowed, if it were known. Such an act, however light they may make of it, is abominable theft, and what any person of religion or any sense of the dignity of their own nature, would to the greatest degree abhor and detest.

3. It is not sufficient to make a private taking without consent not to be stealing, that it is but a small matter that is taken. If the thing be of little value, yet if it be worth a purposed concealing from the owner, the value is great enough to render the taking of it proper theft. If it be pretended that the thing is of so small consequence, that it is not worth asking for; then surely it is not worth a purposed concealing from the owner, when it is taken. He who, under this pretence, conceals his taking, in the very act contradicts his own pretence; for his action shews that he apprehends, or at least suspects, that, as small a matter as it is, the owner would not like the taking of it, if he knew it; otherwise the taker would not desire to conceal it.

The owner of the goods, and not other people, is the proper judge, whether what he owns be of such a value, that it is worth his while to keep it, and to refuse his consent to the taking of it from him. He who possesses, and not he who takes away, has a right to judge of what consequence his possessions are to him. He has a right to set what value he pleases on them, and to treat them according to that value. Besides, merely that a thing is of small value, cannot give a right to others, purposely and designedly to take it away, without the knowledge or consent of the owner. Because if this only gives a right, then all have a right to take things of small value; and at this rate a great number of persons, each of them taking from a man that which is of small value, might take away all he has.

Therefore, it will not justify persons, in purposely taking such things as fruit from the trees, or gardens, or fields of their neighbours, without their knowledge or consent, that the things which they take are things of small value: nor is that sufficient to render such an act, not an act of theft properly so called. This shews also that the smallness of the value of what is privately taken at feasts and entertainments, doth not render the taking of such things not stealing.

The small value of a thing may in some cases justify an occasional taking of things, so far as we may from thence, and from what is generally allowed, reasonably presume that the owner gives his consent. But if that be the case, and persons really take, as supposing that the owner consents to such

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occasional taking, then he that takes will not at all endeavour to do what he does secretly, nor in any measure to avoid notice. But merely the smallness of the value of a thing, can never justify a secret taking of what is another's.

SECT. IV.

The subject applied.—The dishonest warned.

The first use I would make of this doctrine, is to *warn* against all injustice and dishonesty, as to what appertains to our neighbour's temporal goods or possessions. Let me warn all to avoid all ways of unjustly invading or usurping what is their neighbour's, and let me press that exhortation of the apostle, Rom. xii. 17, "Provide things honest in the sight of all men;" which implies, that those things which we provide for ourselves, and use as our own, should be such as we come honestly by; and especially that we should avoid all clandestine or *underhand* ways of obtaining any thing that is our neighbour's, either by fraudulent dealing, or by that taking without our neighbour's knowledge and consent, of which we have been speaking.

I warn you to beware of dishonesty in withholding what is your neighbour's, either by unfaithfulness to your trust in any business which you undertake, or by withholding your neighbour's just and honest dues. Consider that saying of the apostle, Rom. xiii. 8. "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another." Be also warned against wronging your neighbour or injuring him in his inclosures, or in any of his just rights and properties, through careless neglect of what is reasonably expected by neighbours one of another, in order that they may live one by another without mutual injury. Let all beware that they bring not guilt on their souls in the sight of God, by taking an advantage to oppress any person. Especially beware of taking advantage of others' poverty to extort from them: for God will defend their cause, and you will be no gainers by such oppression.

Beware also of all injustice by deceitful and fraudulent dealing. You doubtless meet with abundance of temptation to fraud, and have need to keep a strong guard upon yourselves. There are many temptations to falsehood in trading, both about what you would buy, and what you have to sell. There are, in buying, temptations to do as in Prov. xx. 14. "It is nought, it is nought, saith the buyer." There are many temptations to take indirect courses, to blind those with whom you deal, about the qualities of what you have to sell,

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to diminish the defects of your commodities, or to conceal them, and to put off things for good, which are bad. And there are doubtless many other ways that men meet with temptations to deceive others, which your own experience will better suggest to you than I can.

But here I shall take occasion to speak of a particular kind of fraud, which is very aggravated, and is rather a defrauding of God than man. What I mean is, *the giving of that which is bad for good in public contributions.* Though it be matter of great shame and lamentation that it should be so, yet it is to be feared, from what has sometimes been observed, that there are some who, when there is a public contribution to be made for the poor, or some other pious and charitable use, sometimes take that opportunity *to put off their bad money.* That which they find, or think, their neighbours will refuse to take at their hands, because they will have opportunity to see what is offered them, and to observe the badness of it, even *that* they therefore take opportunity to put off to God.

Hereby they endeavour to save their credit; for they apprehend that they shall be concealed. They appear with others to go to the contribution, as it is not known but that they put in that which is good. But they cheat the church of God, and defraud the expectations of the poor; or, rather, they lie to God: for those who receive what is given, stand as Christ's receivers, and not as acting for themselves in this matter.

They that do thus, do that which is very much of the same nature with that sin, against which God denounces that dreadful curse in Mal. i. 14. "Cursed be the deceiver which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of Hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen." *That hath in his flock a male,* i. e. that has in his flock that which is good and fit to be offered to God; for it was the male of the flock principally that was appointed, in the law of Moses, to be offered in sacrifice. He has in his flock that which is good, but he vows and sacrifices to the Lord, "the torn, the lame, and the sick," as it is said in the foregoing verse; ye said also, "Behold what a weariness is it, and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of Hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hands? saith the Lord."

Contributions in the Christian church come in the room of sacrifices in the Jewish church: mercy comes in the room of sacrifice. And what is offered in the way of mercy is as much offered to God, as the sacrifices of old were. For what

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is done to the poor is done to Christ, and he that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord; Prov. xix. 17. The Jews that offered the sick and lame of the flock, knew that if they had offered it to their governor, and had attempted to put it off as part of the tribute or public taxes due to their earthly rulers, it would not be accepted, and therefore they were willing to put it off to God. "And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy governor, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts."

So those persons who purposely put bad money into contributions, know, that what they put in would not be accepted, if they should offer to pay their public taxes. Yea, they know that their *neighbours* would not accept it at their hands; and therefore they are willing to save themselves by putting it off to God.

This practice has also very much of the nature of the sin of Ananias and Sapphira. What they offered was by way of contribution for charitable uses. The brethren sold what they had, and brought it into a common stock, and put all under the care of deacons, that the poor might every one be supplied. Ananias and Sapphira brought a part of their possessions, and put it into the common stock; and their sin was, that they put it in for more than it really was. It was but a part of what they had, and they put it in, and would have it accepted, as if it had been all. So those among us, of whom I am speaking, put off what they put into the charitable stock for more than it is. For they put it in, under the notion that it is something of some value; they intend it shall be so taken by the church that sees them go to the contribution, when indeed they put in nothing at all.

Ananias and Sapphira were charged with lying to God, and doing an act of fraud towards God himself, in what they did: Acts v. 4. "Whilst it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." So those who knowingly put bad money for good into a contribution for a charitable use, as much as in them lies, commit an act of fraud and deceit towards God. For the deacons who receive what is contributed, receive it not in their own names, but as Christ's receivers. I hope these things may be sufficient to deter every reader from ever daring to do such a thing for the future.

Again, another thing I would warn you against is, stealing, properly and strictly so called; or designedly taking away any of your neighbour's goods without his consent or knowledge. And especially I would now take occasion to

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warn against a practice which is very common in the country, particularly among children and young people; and that is, stealing fruit from their neighbours' trees or inclosures. There is a licentious liberty taken by many children and young people, in making bold with their neighbours' fruit; and it is to be feared, that they are too much countenanced in it by their parents and many elder people.

I am sensible, that the great thing which is pleaded, and made very much the ground of this liberty which is taken, and so much tolerated, is a very abusive and unreasonable construction and application of that text of scripture in Deut. xxiii. 24. "When thou comest into thy neighbour's vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill. But thou shalt not put any in thy vessel." Because this text seems to be so much mistaken and misimproved, I shall therefore endeavour particularly to state the matter of persons taking their neighbours' fruit, and to set it in a just and clear light as concerning this text.

It was to eat their fill of grapes when they *occasionally* came into or passed through their neighbour's vineyard, and not that they should go thither on *purpose* to eat grapes. This is manifest by the manner of expression: "*When thou comest* into thy neighbour's vineyard, thou mayest eat;" *i. e.* when thou art come thither on some other occasion. If God had meant to give them leave to come thither on purpose, for no other end, it would not have been expressed so: but rather thus, *Thou mayest come* into thy neighbour's vineyard, and eat grapes thy fill.—Such were the circumstances of that people, and vineyards among them were so common, that there was no danger that this liberty would be attended with ill consequence. It is manifest throughout the history of Israel, that vineyards among them were so common that the people in general had them. Every husbandman among them was a vine-dresser; and a great part of the business of a husbandman among them, consisted in dressing and taking care of his vineyards. Grapes seem to have been the most common sort of fruit that they had. Besides, there was no liberty given for persons to go on purpose to a vineyard to eat the fruit of it. So that there was no danger of neighbours suffering one by another, by any such liberty.—The liberty did not tend to any such consequence, as the flocking of a great number to eat grapes, whereby the fruit of the vineyard might be much diminished.

Such were the circumstances of the case, that the consent of the owners of vineyards in general might well be presumed upon, though no such express liberty had been given. You may remember, that in the definition of stealing, I observed, that explicit consent is not always necessary;

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because the case may be so circumstanced, that consent may be well presumed on. And the reason why consent might well be presumed on in the case of eating grapes, of which we are now speaking, is, that there could be no sensible injury, nor any danger of any ill consequences, by which a man would sensibly suffer in the benefit of his vineyard. Hence it is the more easy to determine, what would and what would not be justified by this text, among us. Suppose a particular person among us had a vineyard of the same kind with those which the children of Israel had, it would not justify others in using the same liberty when occasionally passing through it; because it would be a rare thing, and the rarity and scarcity of the fruit would render it of much greater value. Besides, if one man were distinguished by such a possession, to allow of such a liberty would have a much greater tendency to ill consequences, than if they were common, as they were in the land of Canaan. There would be danger of many persons falsely pretending and making occasions, to pass through the vineyard, for the sake of such rare fruit.

Nor would it be a parallel case, if men in general among us had each of them a *few* vines. That would be a very different thing from persons in general having large vineyards. Nor would this text, in such a case, warrant men's eating their fill of grapes when occasionally passing by.—And though all in general had vineyards, as they had in the land of Canaan, this text would not justify men in going into their neighbour's vineyard on purpose to eat the fruit. No such liberty is given in the text. If there had been such liberty, it might have been of ill consequence. For the sake of saving their own grapes, men might make a practice of going and sending their children into their neighbour's vineyards, to eat their fill from time to time.

But the liberty given in this text to the children of Israel, seems to be very parallel with the liberty taken among us, to take up an apple or two and eat, as we are occasionally passing through a neighbour's orchard; which, as our circumstances are, we may do, and justly presume that we have the owner's consent. This is a liberty that we take, and find no ill consequences. It was very much so with vineyards in the land of Canaan, as it is with orchards among us. Apples in some countries are a rare fruit; and there it would by no means be warrantable for persons to take the same liberty, when occasionally passing by their neighbour's apple-tree, which we warrantably take here, when going through a neighbour's orchard.

The consideration of these things will easily shew the great abuse that is made of this text, when it is brought to

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justify such a resorting of children and others to their neighbour's fruit-trees, as is sometimes, on purpose to take and eat the fruit. Indeed this practice is not only not justified by the law of Moses, but it is in itself unreasonable, and contrary to the law of nature. The consequences of it are pernicious, so that a man can have no dependence on enjoying the fruit of his labour, or the benefit of his property in those things, which possibly he may very much value. He can have no assurance but that he shall be mainly deprived of what he has, and that others will not have the principal benefit of it; and so that his end in planting and cultivating that from which he expected those fruits of the earth, which God hath given for the use, comfort, and delight of mankind, will not be in the main frustrated.

SECT. V.

An Exhortation to Honesty.

UNDER this use, I shall confine myself to two particulars, many other things having been already spoken to.

1. I shall hence take occasion to exhort *parents* to restrain their children from stealing, and particularly from being guilty of theft in stealing the fruits of their neighbour's trees or fields. Christian parents are obliged to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But how much otherwise do they act, who bring them up in theft! And those parents are guilty of this, who—though they do not directly teach them to steal, by example and setting them about it, yet—*tolerate* them in it.

Parents should take effectual care, not only to instruct their children better, and to warn them against any such thievish practices, but also thoroughly to restrain them. Children who practise stealing, make themselves vile. Stealing, by the common consent of mankind is a very vile practice; therefore those parents that will not take thorough care to restrain their children from such a practice, will be guilty of the same sin which God so highly resented, and awfully punished in *Eli*, of which we read, 1 Sam. iii. 13. "For I have told him, that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

2. I exhort those who are conscious in themselves that they have heretofore wronged their neighbour, to make *restitution*. This is a duty, the obligation to which is exceedingly plain. If a person was wronged in *taking* away any thing that was his, certainly he is wronged also in *detaining* it; and all the while that a person, who has been guilty of wronging

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his neighbour, neglects to make restitution, he lives in that wrong. He not only lives impenitent as to that first wrong of which he was guilty, but he *continually* wrongs his neighbour. A man who hath gotten any thing from another wrongfully, *goes on* to wrong him every day that he neglects to restore it, when he has opportunity to do it. The person injured did not only suffer wrong from the other when his goods were first taken from him, but he suffers new injustice from him all the while they are unjustly kept from him.

Therefore I counsel you who are conscious that you have heretofore wronged your neighbour, either by fraud, or oppression, or unfaithfulness, or stealing, whether lately or formerly, though it may have been a great while ago, speedily to go and make restitution for all the wrong your neighbour has suffered at your hands. That it was done long ago, doth not quit you from obligation to restore. This is a duty with which you must comply; you cannot be acquitted without it. As long as you neglect it, it will be unreasonable in you to expect any forgiveness of God. For what ground can you have to think that God will pardon you, as long as you wilfully continue in the same wrong, and wrong the same man still every day, by detaining from him that which is his? You in your prayers ask of God, that he would forgive all your sins; but your very prayers are mockery, if you still wilfully continue in those sins.—Indeed, if you go and confess your faults to your neighbour, and he will freely acquit you from making restitution, you will be acquitted from the obligation; for in so doing, your neighbour gives you what before was his. But otherwise you cannot be acquitted.

I would leave this advice with all, for direction in their behaviour on their death-beds. Indeed you should not by any means put it off till you come to die; and you will run the most fearful risk in so doing. But if you will not do it now, while you are in health, I will leave it with you to remember, when you shall come to lie on your death-beds. Doubtless, then if you have the use of your reason, you will be concerned for the salvation of your poor souls. And let this be one thing then remembered, as absolutely necessary in order to your salvation, that before you die, you must make restitution for whatever wrong you shall have done any of your neighbours; or at least leave orders that such restitution be made; otherwise you will, as it were, go out of the world, and go before your Great Judge, with stolen goods in your hands. And certainly it will not be very comfortable or safe, to bring them into his infinitely holy and dreadful presence, when he sits on his throne of judgment, with his eyes as a flame of fire, being more pure than to look on iniquity; when he is about to sentence you to your everlasting unalterable state.

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SERMON IV.

TEMPTATION AND DELIVERANCE;

OR,

JOSEPH's GREAT TEMPTATION AND GRACIOUS DELIVERANCE.

GENESIS xxxix. 12.

And he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.

WE have here, and in the context, an account of that remarkable behaviour of Joseph in the house of Potiphar, which was the occasion both of his great affliction, and also of his high advancement and prosperity in the land of Egypt.

We read, in the beginning of the chapter, how Joseph, after he had been so cruelly treated by his brethren, and sold into Egypt for a slave, was advanced in the house of Potiphar, who had bought him. Joseph was one that feared God, and therefore God was with him; and so influenced the heart of Potiphar his master, that instead of keeping him as a mere slave, to which purpose he was sold, he made him his steward and overseer over his house, and all that he had was put into his hands; in so much, that we are told, ver. 6, *that he left all that he had in his hand; and he knew not ought that he had, save the bread which he did eat.*—While Joseph was in these prosperous circumstances, he met with a great temptation in his master's house. We are told that, he being a goodly person and well favoured, his mistress cast her eyes upon and lusted after him, and used all her art to tempt him to commit uncleanness with her.

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Concerning this temptation, and his behaviour under it, many things are worthy to be noted. Particularly,

We may observe, how *great* the temptation was, that he was under. It is to be considered, that Joseph was now in his *youth*; a season of life, when persons are most liable to be overcome by temptations of this nature. And he was in a state of unexpected *prosperity* in Potiphar's house; which has a tendency to lift persons up, especially young ones, whereby commonly they more easily fall before temptations.

And then, the *superiority* of the person that laid the temptation before him, rendered it much the greater. She was his mistress, and he a servant under her. And the *manner* of her tempting him. She did not only carry herself so towards Joseph, as to give him cause to *suspect* that he might be admitted to such criminal converse with her; but she directly *proposed* it to him; plainly manifesting her disposition to it. So that here was no such thing as a suspicion of her unwillingness to deter him, but a manifestation of her desire to entice him to it. Yea, she appeared greatly engaged in the matter. And there was not only her desire manifested to entice him, but her authority over him to enforce the temptation. She was his mistress, and he might well imagine, that if he utterly refused a compliance, he should incur her displeasure; and she, being his master's wife, had power to do much to his disadvantage, and to render his circumstances more uncomfortable in the family.

And the temptation was the greater, in that she did not only tempt him once, but frequently, *day by day*, ver. 10. And at last became more violent with him. She caught him by his garment, saying, *Lie with me.*

His *behaviour* was very remarkable under these temptations. He absolutely refused any compliance with them: he made no reply that manifested as though the temptation had gained at all upon him: so much as to hesitate about it, or at all deliberate upon it. He complied in no *degree*, either to the gross act she proposed, or any thing *tending* towards it, or that should at all be gratifying to her wicked inclination. And he persisted resolute and unshaken under her continual solicitations, ver. 10. *And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.* He, to his utmost, avoided so much as being where she was. And the motives and principles, from which he acted, manifested by his reply to her solicitations, are remarkable.—He first sets before her, how injuriously he should act against his master, if he should comply with her proposal: *Behold my master—hath committed all that he hath to my hand; there is none greater in this house*

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than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me, but thee, because thou art his wife. But he then proceeded to inform her of that, which above all things, deterred him from a compliance, *viz.* that it would be great wickedness, and sin against God.—*How shall I do this, and sin against God?* He would not do any such thing, as he would not injure his master; but that which influenced him more than all on this occasion, was the fear of sinning against God. On this account he persisted in his resolution to the last.

In the text we have an account of his behaviour under the last and greatest temptation that he had from her. This temptation was great, as it was at a time when there was no body in the house, but he and his mistress, ver. 11; there was an opportunity to commit the fact with the greatest secrecy. And at this time it seems that she was more violent than ever before. She caught him by the garment, &c. She laid hold on him, as though she was resolute to attain her purpose of him.

Under these circumstances he not only refused her, but fled from her, as he would have done from one that was going to assassinate him; he escaped, as for his life. He not only would not be guilty of such a fact, but neither would he by any means be in the house with her, where he should be in the way of her temptation.—This behaviour of Joseph is doubtless recorded for the instruction of all. Therefore from the words I shall observe, that it is our duty, not only to avoid those things that are themselves sinful, but also, as far as may be, those things that lead and expose to sin.

SECT. I.

Why we should avoid what tends to Sin.

THUS did Joseph: he not only refused actually to commit uncleanness with his mistress, who enticed him; but refused to be there, where he should be in the way of temptation, ver. 10. He refused to lie by her, or be with her. And in the text we are told, *he fled and got him out;* would by no means be in her company. Though it was no sin in itself, for Joseph to be in the house where his mistress was; but under these circumstances it would expose him to sin. Joseph was sensible he had naturally a corrupt heart, that tended to betray him to sin; and therefore he would by no means be in the way of temptation; but with haste he fled, he ran from the dangerous place. In as much as he was exposed to sin in that house, he fled out of it with as much haste as if it had been on fire; or full of enemies, who stood ready with drawn swords to stab him to

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the very heart. When she took him by the garment, he left his garment in her hands; he had rather lose his garment, than stay a moment there, where he was in such danger of losing his chastity.

I said, that persons should avoid things that expose to sin, *as far as may be;* because it is possible that persons may be *called* to expose themselves to temptation; and when it is so, they may hope for divine strength and protection under temptation.

It may be a man's indispensable duty to undertake an office, or a work, attended with a great deal of temptation. Thus *ordinarily* a man ought not to run into the temptation of being persecuted for the true religion; lest the temptation should be too hard for him; but should avoid it, as much as may be; therefore Christ thus directs his disciples, Matth. x. 23. *When ye be persecuted in one city, flee to another.* Yet, the case may be so, that a man may be called not to flee from persecution; but to run the venture of such a trial, trusting in God to uphold him under it. Ministers and magistrates may be obliged to continue with their people in such circumstances; as Nehemiah says, Neh. vi. 11. *Should such a man as I flee?* So the apostles.—Yea, they may be called to go into the midst of it; to those places where they cannot reasonably expect but to meet with such temptations. So Paul went up to Jerusalem, when he knew beforehand, that *there, bonds and affliction awaited him,* Acts xx. 23.

So in some other cases, the necessity of affairs may call upon men to engage in some business that is peculiarly attended with temptations. But when it is so they are indeed least exposed to sin; for they are always safest in the way of duty. Prov. x. 9. *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely.* And though there be many things by which they may have extraordinary temptations, in the affairs they have undertaken, yet if they have a clear call, it is no presumption to hope for divine support and preservation in it.

But for persons needlessly to expose themselves to temptation, and to do those things that tend to sin, is unwarrantable, and contrary to that excellent example set before us. And that we ought to avoid not only those things that are in themselves sinful, but also those things that lead and *expose* to sin, is manifest by the following arguments.

1. It is very evident that we ought to use our utmost endeavours to avoid sin: which is inconsistent with needlessly doing those things, that expose and lead to sin. And the greater any evil is, the greater care, and the more earnest endeavours, does it require to avoid it. Those evils that appear to us very great and dreadful, we use proportionably great

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care to avoid. And therefore the greatest evil of all, requires the greatest and utmost care to avoid it.

Sin is an infinite evil, because committed against an infinitely great and excellent Being, and so a violation of infinite obligation: therefore however great our care be to avoid sin, it cannot be more than proportionable to the evil we would avoid. Our care and endeavour cannot be infinite, as the evil of sin is infinite; but yet it ought to be to the utmost of our power; we ought to use every method that tends to the avoiding of sin. This is manifest to reason.—And not only so, but this is positively required of us in the word of God. Josh. xxii. 5, "Take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your soul." Deut. iv. 15, 16. "Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves, lest ye corrupt yourselves." Chap. xii. 30. "Take heed to thyself, that thou be not snared," &c. Luke xi. 36. "Take heed and beware of covetousness." 1 Cor. x. 12. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." Deut. iv. 9. "Take heed to thyself, keep thy soul diligently." These and many other texts of scripture, plainly require of us, the utmost possible diligence and caution to avoid sin.

But how can he be said to use the utmost possible diligence and caution to avoid sin, that voluntarily does those things which naturally expose and lead to sin? How can he be said with the utmost possible caution to avoid an enemy, that voluntarily lays himself in his way? How can he be said to use the utmost possible caution to preserve the life of his child, that suffers it to go on the edge of precipices or pits; or to play on the borders of a deep gulph; or to wander in a wood, that is haunted by beasts of prey?

2. It is evident that we ought to avoid those things that expose and lead to sin; because a due sense of the evil of sin, and a just hatred of it, will necessarily have this effect upon us, to cause us so to do.—If we were duly sensible of the evil and dreadful nature of sin, we should have an exceeding dread of it upon our spirits. We should hate it worse than death, and should fear it worse than the devil himself; and dread it even as we dread damnation. But those things that men exceedingly dread, they naturally shun; and they avoid those things that they apprehend expose to them. As a child, that has been greatly terrified by the sight of any wild beast, will by no means be persuaded to go where it apprehends that it shall fall in its way.

As sin in its own nature is infinitely hateful, so in its

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natural tendency it is infinitely dreadful. It is the tendency of all sin, eternally to undo the soul. Every sin naturally carries hell in it! Therefore, all sin ought to be treated by us, as we would treat a thing that is infinitely terrible. If any one sin, yea, the least sin, do not necessarily bring eternal ruin with it, this is owing to nothing but the free grace and mercy of God to us, and not to the nature and tendency of sin itself. But certainly, we ought not to take the less care to avoid sin, or all that tends to it, for the freeness and greatness of God's mercy to us, through which there is hope of pardon; for that would be indeed a most ungrateful and vile abuse of mercy. Were it made known to us, that if we ever voluntarily committed any particular act of sin, we should be damned without any remedy or escape, should we not exceedingly dread the commission of such? Should we not be very watchful and careful to stand at the greatest distance from that sin: and from every thing that might expose us to it; and that has any tendency to stir up our lusts, or to betray us to such an act of sin? Let us then consider, that though the next voluntary act of known sin, shall not necessarily and unavoidably *issue* in certain damnation; yet it will certainly *deserve* it. We shall thereby really deserve to be cast off, without any remedy or hope; and it can only be owing to free grace, that it will not certainly and remedilessly be followed with such a punishment. And shall we be guilty of such a vile abuse of God's mercy to us, as to take encouragement from it, the more boldly to expose ourselves to sin?

3. It is evident that we ought not only to avoid sin, but things that expose and lead to sin: because this is the way we act in things that pertain to our temporal interest.—Men avoid not only those things that are themselves the hurt or ruin of their temporal interest, but also the things that tend or expose to it. Because they love their temporal lives, they will not only actually avoid killing themselves, but they are very careful to avoid those things that bring their lives into danger; though they do not certainly know but they may escape.

They are careful not to pass rivers and deep waters on rotten ice, though they do not certainly know that they shall fall through and be drowned. They will not only avoid those things that would be in themselves the ruin of their estates—as setting their own houses on fire, and burning them up with their substance; taking their money and throwing it into the sea, &c.; but they carefully avoid those things by which their estates are exposed. They have their eyes about them; are careful with whom they deal; are watchful, that they be not over-reached in their bargains; and that they do not lay themselves open to knaves and fraudulent persons.

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If a man be sick of a dangerous distemper, he is careful to avoid every thing that tends to increase the disorder; not only what he knows to be mortal, but other things that he fears may be prejudicial to him. Men are in this way wont to take care of their temporal interest. And therefore, if we are not as careful to avoid sin, as we are to avoid injury in our temporal interest, it will shew a regardless disposition with respect to sin and duty; or that we do not much care though we do sin against God. God's glory is surely of as much importance and concern as our temporal interest. Certainly we should be as careful not to be exposed to sin against the Majesty of heaven and earth, as men are wont to be of a few pounds; yea, the latter are but mere trifles, compared with the former.

4. We are wont to do thus by our dear earthly friends. —We not only are careful of those things wherein the destruction of their lives, or their hurt and calamity in any respect, directly consist; but are careful to avoid those things that but remotely tend to it. We are careful to prevent all occasions of their loss; and are watchful against that which tends in any wise, to deprive them of their comfort or good name; and the reason is, because they are very dear to us. In this manner, men are wont to be careful of the good of their own children, and dread the approaches of any mischief that they apprehend they are, or may be exposed to. And we should take it hard if our friends did not do thus by us.

And surely we ought to treat God as a dear friend: we ought to act towards him, as those that have a sincere love and unfeigned regard to him; and so ought to watch and be careful against all *occasions* of that which is contrary to his honour and glory. If we have not a temper and desire so to do, it will shew that whatever our pretences are, we are not God's sincere friends, and have no true love to him.—If we should be offended at any that have professed friendship to us, if they treated us in this manner, and were no more careful of our interest; surely God may justly be offended, that we are no more careful of his glory.

5. We would have God, in his providence towards us, not to order those things that tend to our hurt, or expose our interest; therefore certainly we ought to avoid those things that lead to sin against him.

We desire and love to have God's providence such towards us, as that our welfare may be well secured. No man loves to live exposed, uncertain, and in dangerous circumstances. While he is so, he lives uncomfortably, in that he lives in continual fear. We desire that God would so order things concerning us, that we may be safe from fear of

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evil; and that no evil may come nigh our dwelling; and that because we dread calamity. So we do not love the appearance and approaches of it; and love to have it at a great distance from us. We desire to have God to be to us as a wall of fire round about us, to defend us; and that he would surround us as the mountains do the vallies, to guard us from every danger, or enemy; that so no evil may come nigh us.

Now this plainly shews, that we ought, in our behaviour towards God, to keep at a great distance from sin, and from all that exposes to it; as we desire God in his providence to us, should keep calamity and misery at a great distance from us, and not to order those things that expose our welfare.

6. Seeing we are to pray we may not be led into temptation; certainly we ought not to run ourselves into it.—This is one request that Christ directs us to make to God in that form of prayer, which he taught his disciples—"Lead us not into temptation." And how inconsistent shall we be with ourselves if we pray to God, that we should not be led into temptations; and at the same time, we are not careful to avoid temptation; but bring ourselves into it, by doing those things that lead and expose to sin. What self-contradiction is it for a man to pray to God that he may be kept from that which he takes no care to avoid? By praying that we may be kept from temptation, we profess to God that being in temptation, is a thing to be avoided; but by running into it, we shew that we choose the contrary, *viz.* not to avoid it.

7. The apostle directs us to avoid those things that are in themselves lawful, but tend to lead others into sin; surely then we should avoid what tends to lead ourselves into sin.—The apostle directs, 1 Cor. viii. 9, "Take heed lest—this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak." Rom. xiv. 13. "That no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." Ver. 15. "But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat." Ver. 20, 21. "For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."—Now if this rule of the apostle be agreeable to the word of Christ, as we must suppose, or expunge what he says out of the canon of the scripture; then a like rule obliges more strongly in those things that tend to lead *ourselves* into sin.

8. There are many precepts of scripture, which directly and positively imply, that we ought to avoid those things that tend to sin.

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This very thing is commanded by Christ, Matt. xxvi. 41, where he directs us to "watch lest we enter into temptation." But certainly, running ourselves into temptation, is the reverse of watching against it.—We are commanded to abstain from all *appearance* of evil; *i. e.* do by sin as a man does by a thing the sight or appearance of which he hates: and therefore will avoid any thing that looks like it; and will not come near or in sight of it.

Again, Christ commanded to separate from us, those things that are stumbling-blocks, or occasions of sin, however dear they are to us. Matt. v. 29. "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee." Ver. 30. "And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off." By the right hand offending us, is not meant its paining us; but the word in the original signifies, being a stumbling-block; if thy right hand prove a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall; *i. e.* an occasion to sin. Those things are called offences or stumbling-blocks in the New Testament, which are the occasions of falling into sin.—Yea, Christ tells us, we must avoid them, however dear they are to us, though as dear as our right hand or right eye. If there be any practice that naturally tends and exposes us to sin, we must have done with it; though we love it never so well, and are never so loth to part with it; though it be as contrary to our inclination, as to cut off our own right hand, or pluck out our own right eye; and that upon pain of damnation: for it is intimated that if we do not, we must go with two hands and two eyes into hell fire.

Again: God took great care to forbid the children of Israel those things that tended to lead them into sin. For this reason, he forbade them marrying strange wives, (Deut. vii. 3, 4.) "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them,—for they will turn away thy sons from following me, that they may serve other gods." For this reason they were commanded to destroy all those things that the nations of Canaan had used in their idolatry; and if any were enticed over to idolatry, they were to be destroyed without mercy; though ever so near and dear friends. They were not only to be parted with, but stoned with stones; yea, they themselves were to fall upon them, and put them to death, though son or daughter, or their bosom friend. (Deut. xiii. 6, &c.) "If thy brother,—or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods,—thou shalt not consent unto him,—neither shalt thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him. But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death."

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Again, The wise man warns us to avoid those things that tend and expose us to sin; especially the sin of uncleanness. Prov. vi. 27. "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt?—So, whosoever touches her, shall not be innocent." This is the truth held forth; avoid those customs and practices, that naturally tend to stir up lust. And there are many examples in scripture, which have the force of precept; and recorded, as not only worthy, but demand our imitation. The conduct of Joseph is one; and that recorded of King David, is another. Psal. xxxix. 1, 2. "I said I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good:"—even from good—that is, he was so watchful over his words, and kept at such a great distance from speaking what might in any way tend to sin; that he avoided, in certain circumstances, speaking what was in itself lawful; lest he should be betrayed into that which was sinful.

9. A prudent sense of our own weakness, and exposedness to yield to temptation, obliges us to avoid that which leads or exposes to sin.

Whoever knows himself, and is sensible how weak he is, and his constant exposedness to run into sin; how full of corruption his heart is, which like fuel, is ready to catch fire, and bring destruction upon him—how much he has in him to incline him to sin, and how unable he is to stand of himself—who is sensible of this, and has any regard of his duty, will he not be very watchful against every thing that may lead and expose to sin? On this account Christ directed us, Matt. xxvi. 41, "*To watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation.*" The reason is added, the flesh is weak! He who, in confidence of his own strength, boldly runs the venture of sinning, by going into temptation, manifests great presumption, and a sottish insensibility of his own weakness. *He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.* Prov. xxviii. 26.

The wisest and strongest, and some of the most holy men in the world, have been overthrown by such means. So was David; so was Solomon;—his wives turned away his heart. If such persons so eminent for holiness were this way led into sin, surely it should be a warning to us. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

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SECT. II.

What Things lead and expose to Sin.

If any thing be made out clearly, from reason and the word of God, to be our duty, this would be enough with all Christians. Will a follower of Christ stand objecting and disputing against what is irrefragably proved and demonstrated to be his duty?

But some may be ready to inquire—How shall we know what things do lead and expose to sin? Let a man do what he will, he cannot avoid sinning, as long as he has such a corrupt heart within him. And there is nothing a man can do, but he may find some temptation in it. And though it be true, that a man ought to avoid those things that lead and expose to sin—And that those things which have a special tendency to expose men to sin, are what we ought to shun, as much as in us lies—yet how shall we judge and determine, what things have a natural tendency to sin; or do especially lead to it?

I would answer in some particulars which are plain and easy; and which cannot be denied without the greatest absurdity.

1. That which borders on those sins, to which the lusts of men's hearts strongly incline them, is of this sort. Men come into the world with many strong and violent lusts in their hearts, and are exceeding prone of themselves to transgress; even in the safest circumstances in which they can be placed. And surely so much the nearer they are to that sin, to which they are naturally strongly inclined; so much the more are they exposed. If any of us who are parents should see our children near the brink of some deep pit; or close by the edge of the precipice of a high mountain; and not only so, but the ground upon which the child stood slippery, and steeply descending directly toward the precipice; should we not reckon a child exposed in such a case? Should we not be in haste to remove the child from its very dangerous situation?

It was the manner among the Israelites, to build their houses with flat roofs, so that persons might walk on the tops of their houses. And therefore God took care to make it a law among them, that every man should have battlements upon the edges of their roofs; lest any person should fall off and be killed. Deut. xxii. 8. "When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence."

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And certainly we ought to take the like care that we do not fall into sin; which carries in it eternal death. We should, as it were, fix a battlement, a guard, to keep us from the edge of the precipice. Much more ought we to take care, that we do not go upon a roof that is not only without battlements, but when it is steep, and we shall naturally incline to fall.—Men's lusts are like strong enemies, endeavouring to draw them into sin. If a man stood upon a dangerous precipice; and had enemies about him, pulling and drawing him, endeavouring to throw him down; would he, in such a case, choose, or dare to stand near the edge? Would he look upon himself safe, close on the brink? Would he not endeavour, for his own safety, to keep at a distance?

2. Those things that tend to feed lusts in the imagination, are of this kind.—They lead and expose men to sin. Those things that have a natural tendency to excite in the mind the imagination of that which is the object of the lust, certainly tend to feed and promote that lust. What can be more evident, than that a presenting of the object tends to stir up the appetite? Reason and experience teach this.—Therefore, all things, whether words or actions, which have a tendency and expose to sin, tend also to raise in the mind imaginations of what the lust tends to. It is certainly wrong to feed a lust even in the imagination. It is quite contrary to the holy rules of God's words. Prov. xxiv. 9. "The thought of foolishness is sin." Matth. v. 28. "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery." A man, by gratifying his lusts in his imagination and thoughts, may make his soul in the sight of God to be a hold of foul spirits; and like a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. And sinful imaginations tend to sinful actions, and outward behaviour in the end. Lust is always first conceived in the imagination, and then brought forth in the outward practice. You may see the progress of it in Jam. i. 15. *Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.*—Such things are abominable in the sight of a pure and holy God. We are commanded to keep at a great distance from spiritual pollution; and to hate even the very "garment spotted with the flesh." Jude 23.

3. Those things that the experience and observation of mankind shew to be ordinarily attended or followed with sin, are of this sort. Experience is a good rule to determine by in things of this nature. How do we know the natural tendency of any thing, but by observation and experience? Men observe and find, that some things are commonly attended and followed with other things; and hence mankind pronounce, that they have a natural tendency to them. We have no other way to know the tendency of any thing. Thus

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men by observation and experience know that the warmth of the sun, and showers of rain, are attended with the growth of plants; and hence they learn, that they have a tendency to it. So they find by experience, that the bite of some kinds of serpents, is commonly followed with illness, and often with death: and hence they learn, that the bite of such serpents has a natural tendency to bring disorder upon the body, and exposes to death.—And so, if experience and common observation shews, that any particular practice or custom is commonly attended with that which is very sinful, we may safely conclude that such a practice *tends* to sin; that it leads and exposes to it.

Thus we may determine that tavern-haunting and gaming are things that tend to sin; because common experience and observation shew, that those practices are attended with a great deal of sin and wickedness. The observation of all ages and all nations, with one voice declares it. It shews where taverns are much frequented for drinking and the like, they are especially places of sin, of profaneness, and other wickedness: and it shews, that those towns, where there is much of this, are places where no good generally prevails. And it also shews, that those persons that are given much to frequenting taverns, are most commonly vicious persons. And so of gaming, as playing at cards; experience shews, that those persons that practise this, do generally fall into much sin. Hence these practices are become infamous among all sober virtuous persons.

4. Another way by which persons may determine of some things, that they lead and expose to sin, is by their own experience, or what they have found in themselves.—This surely is enough to convince them, that such things actually lead and expose to sin; for what will convince men, if their own experience will not? Thus if men have found by undeniable experience, that any practice or custom stirs up lust in them, and has betrayed them into foolish and sinful behaviour, or sinful thoughts; they may determine that they lead to sin. If they, upon examining themselves, must own that a custom or practice, has disposed them to the omission of known duty, such as secret or family prayer, and has indisposed them to reading and religious meditation—or if they find, since they have complied with such a custom, they are less watchful of their hearts, less disposed to any thing that is serious; that the frame of their mind is more light, and their hearts less disposed on the things of another world, and more after vanity—these are *sinful effects*; and therefore, if experience shews a custom or practice to be attended with these things, then experience shews that they lead and expose to sin.

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5. We may determine whether a thing be of an evil tendency or not, by the effect that an outpouring of the Spirit of God, and a general flourishing of religion, has with respect to it. If this puts a stop to any practice or custom, and roots it out; surely it argues, that that practice or custom is of no good tendency. For if there be no hurt in it, and it tends to no hurt, why should the Spirit of God destroy it? The Spirit of God has no tendency to destroy any thing that is neither sinful, nor has any tendency to sin. Why should it? Why should we suppose, that he is an enemy to that which has no hurt in it; nor has any tendency to that which is hurtful?

The flourishing of religion has no tendency to abolish or expel any thing that is no way against religion. That which is not against religion, religion will not appear against. It is a rule that holds in all contraries and opposites: the opposition is equal on both sides. So contrary as light is to darkness, so contrary is darkness to light. So contrary as the flourishing of religion is to any custom, just so contrary is that custom to the flourishing of religion. That custom that religion tends to destroy, that custom, if it prevail, tends also to destroy religion. Therefore, if the flourishing of religion, and the outpouring of the Spirit of God, tends to overthrow any custom, that takes place or prevails, we may surely determine, that that custom is either in itself sinful, or tends and exposes to evil.

6. We may determine, by the effect that a general decay of religion has with respect to them, whether they be things of a sinful tendency or not. If they be things that come with a decay of religion, that creep in as that decays, we may determine they are things of no good tendency. The withdrawing of good, does not let in good, but evil. Evil, not good, comes in, as good gradually ceases. What is it but darkness that comes in, as light withdraws?

Therefore, if there be any decay of religion in the town, or in particular persons, and upon this, any certain customs or practices take place and are allowed, which were wholly abstained from and renounced, when religion was in a more flourishing state; we may safely conclude that such customs and practices are contrary to the nature of true religion; and therefore in themselves sinful, or tending to sin.

7. We may in many things determine, whether any custom be of a good tendency, by considering what the effect would be, if it was openly and universally owned and practised. There are many things which persons practise somewhat secretly, and which they plead to be not hurtful; but which, if they had suitable consideration to discern the consequence of every body openly practising the same, would

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soon shew a most woeful state of things. If therefore there be any custom, that will not bear universal open practice and profession; we may determine, that *that* custom is of an ill tendency. For if it is neither sinful in itself, nor tends to any thing sinful, then it is no matter how open it is; for we need not be afraid of that custom being too prevalent and universal, that has no ill tendency in it.

SECT. III.

A serious Warning to all, and especially young People.

THUS I have mentioned some general rules, by which to determine and judge, what things are of a bad and sinful tendency. And these things are so plain, that for a person to deny them, would be absurd and ridiculous. I would now, in the name of God, *warn all persons* to avoid such things as appear by these rules to lead and expose to sin. And particularly, I would take occasion to warn *young people*, as they would approve themselves fearers of God, to avoid all such things in company, that being tried by these rules, will appear to have a tendency to sin. Avoid all such ways of talking and acting as have a tendency to this; and follow the example of Joseph. Not only gross acts of uncleanness, but all degrees of lasciviousness, both in talking and acting, are strictly forbidden in scripture; as what should not be so much as once named among saints or Christians. Gal. v. 9. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness." Eph. v. 3, 4, 5. "But fornication, and all uncleanness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; for this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." We should hate even the garments spotted with the flesh, *i. e.* should hate and shun all that, in the least degree, approaches to any such thing.

And I desire that certain customs, too common among young people, may be examined by those rules that have been mentioned. That custom in particular, of young people of different sexes reclining together: however little is made of it, and however ready persons may be to laugh at its being condemned, if it be examined by the rules that have been mentioned, it will appear, past all contradiction, to be one of those things that lead and expose to sin. And I believe experience and fact abundantly bear witness to it. It has been one main thing that has led to the growth of uncleanness in the land. And there are other customs and liberties,

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customarily used among young people in company, which they who use them know that they lead to sin. They know that they stir up their lusts; and this is the very end for which they do it, to gratify their lusts in some measure. Little do such persons consider, what a holy God they are soon to be judged by, who abominates the impurities of their hearts.—If therefore they do actually stir up and feed lust, then certainly they tend to further degrees and more gross acts. That which stirs up lust, makes it more violent, and does therefore certainly the more expose persons to be overcome by it. How evident and undeniable are these things; and how strange that any should make a derision of them!

Possibly you may be confident of your own strength; and may think within yourself, that you are not in danger, that there is no temptation in these things, but what you are able easily to overcome. But you should consider that the most self-confident are most in danger. Peter was very confident, that he should not deny Christ, but how dreadfully otherwise was the event! If others that have fallen into gross sins, should declare how it was with them; doubtless they would say, that they at first thought there was no danger; they were far from the thought that ever they should commit such wickedness; but yet, by venturing further and further, they fell at last into the foulest and grossest transgressions. Persons may long withstand temptation, and be suddenly overcome at last. None so much in danger, as the most bold. They are most safe, who are most sensible of their own weakness; most distrustful of their own hearts; and most sensible of their continual need of restraining grace. Young persons, with respect to the sin of uncleanness, are dealt with by the devil just as some give an account of serpents charming birds and other animals down into their mouths. If the serpent takes them with his eyes, though they seem to be affrighted by it, yet they will not flee away, but will keep the serpent in sight, and approach nearer and nearer to him, till they fall a prey.

Another custom that I desire may be examined by the forementioned rules, is that of young people of both sexes getting together in companies for mirth, and spending the time together till late in the night, in their jollity. I desire our young people to suffer their ears to be open to what I have to say upon this point, as I am the messenger of the Lord of Hosts to them; and not determine that they will not hearken, before they have heard what I shall say. I hope there are but few persons among us so abandoned, as to determine that they will go on in a practice, whether they are convinced that it is unlawful or not; or though it should be proved to them to be unlawful by undeniable arguments. Let us then examine this custom and practice by what has

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been said. It has been proved undeniably, that we ought not to go on in a practice that leads and exposes to sin; and rules have been laid down to judge what does thus expose and lead to it, which I think are plain and undeniable. Certainly a Christian will not be unwilling to have his practices examined and tried by the rules of reason and God's word; but will rather rejoice in it. And I desire particularly that the practice may be tried by that sure touchstone of experience. This is one of the rules of trial that have been mentioned; that any custom which the experience and observation of mankind shew to be ordinarily attended with sin, may be concluded to be unlawful. And if we look abroad in the country, I doubt not but these two things will be found.

1. That as to those *places*, where there is most of this carried on among young people, (as there is more of it in some places than others,) it will be found, as a thing that universally holds, that the young people there are commonly a loose, vain, and irreligious generation; little regarding God, heaven or hell, or any thing but vanity. And that commonly in those towns where most frolicking is carried on, there are the most frequent breakings out of gross sins; fornication in particular.

2. If we go through the country, we shall for the most part find, that those *persons* who are most addicted to this practice, are the furthest from serious thought, and are the vainest and loosest upon other accounts. And whence should this be, if such a practice was not sinful, or had not a natural tendency to lead persons into sin.

Now I appeal to those who have made pretences to serious religion and saving piety. You have formerly pretended to keep up religion in your closets, and in your own souls; now seriously ask yourselves whether or no you have not found, that this practice has *indisposed* you to serious religion, and taken off your minds from it? Has it not tended to your neglect of secret prayer? And, if you have not wholly neglected it, have you not found, that you have been abundantly more ready to turn it off in *any* manner, and glad to have done with it? More backward to reading and serious meditation, and such things? And, that your mind has been exceedingly diverted from religion, and that for some time?—I do not send you far off to find out whether this custom be not of bad tendency—not beyond the sea, but your own breast; there let the matter be determined.

Let us now try this custom by the effect which the outpouring of the Spirit of God on a people has with respect to it. This we are under great advantage to do; because there

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has lately been, in this place, the most remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God, that has ever been in New England, and it may be in the world, since the apostles' days. And it is well known, that *before* then, the custom *did* prevail in the town; but *after*, the custom was altogether laid aside; and was so for several years.—No account can be given why the Spirit of God, and the flourishing of religion, should abolish such a custom, unless that custom be either in its nature or tendency an enemy to the Spirit of God, and to religion.—The fruits of the Spirit of God are good, and therefore it is good that this custom should be removed; for this is plainly one of the effects. And if so, it is because the custom is bad, either in its nature or tendency; otherwise there would be no good in its being removed. The Spirit of God abolished this custom for this reason, because if it had been kept up in the town, it would have had a direct tendency to hinder that work which the Spirit was about to do amongst us. This was undeniably the reason.

Supposing such a custom had been begun and set up, by the young people all over the town, in the midst of the time of the late outpouring of the Spirit, all of a sudden; would any wise persons, that have truly the cause of religion at heart, rejoiced at it? Would not every one have concluded, without any hesitation, that there was great danger that it would take off people's minds from religion, and make them vain: and so put an end to the flourishing of religion? Would not every considerate person have thought thus of it? And if such a custom would have had an ill tendency *then*, so it will *now*.

Objection. The town is not in such circumstances now, as it was then: it might have done hurt then, by putting an end to the great concern; but now it may do no hurt: for there is now no such great concern to be interrupted by it.

Answer. Though the town is not in such circumstances now as it was then, yet there *ought* to be as much engagedness of mind about religion; as much concern among sinners; and as much engagedness among the godly, as then: and it is to our shame that there is not. And if such a practice would have tended to *destroy* such a religious concern then, it certainly tends to *prevent* it now. It is a rule that will hold, that what has a tendency to destroy a thing when it is, tends to prevent when it is not. And are we not praying from sabbath to sabbath, and from day to day, for such a concern again? And do not those who pretend to be converted, and yet have lately set up this custom, pray for the same? Are you a convert, a saint, and yet not desire that there should be

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any more pouring out of the Spirit of God? The town has cause to be ashamed of such converts, if it has any such. And if ye do, why do you do what tends to prevent it?

Again, Let this practice be tried by the effect that a general decay of religion has with respect to it. Now we have a trial: it is now a time that religion is greatly decayed amongst us; and the effect is, that this custom comes in with this decay. Young people begin again to set up their old custom of *frolicking* (as it is called) and spending a great part of the night in it, to the violation of family order. What is the reason, if this custom is not bad, either in its nature or tendency, that it did not come in before, when religion was lively? Why does it stay till it can take the advantage of the withdrawment of religion? This is a sign that it is a custom that shuns a spirit of lively religion, as darkness shuns the light, and never comes in till light withdraws.

And here again, I would send persons to their own experience. How did this practice come in with you in particular: you, that two or three years ago, seemed to be so engaged in religion! Did it not come in, did you not begin to practise it, as the sense of religion wore off? And what is the matter! Why did you not set up the practice then, when your heart was taken up about reading, meditation, and secret prayer to God? If this do not at all stand in the way of them, and is no hindrance to them, why was you not engaged in both together? What account can you give of it? Why did you leave off this practice and custom, or abstain from it? To what purpose is this changing? One while it must be avoided as evil, and another while practised and pleaded for as good? The making such an alteration does not look well, nor will it be for the honour of religion in the eye of the world. For whether the practice be lawful or not, yet such a thing will surely be improved to our disadvantage. For your avoiding it then, has this appearance, in the eye of the country, that then you condemned it: and therefore your now returning to it, will appear to them as backsliding in you. Such changelings are evermore, in the eye of the world, greatly to the dishonour of their profession, let it be what it will.

Indeed, this custom as it is practised, does not only tend to sin, but is in itself very disorderly, sinful and shameful. For it is attended late in the night, and in the dead of the night, to the neglect of family prayer, and violating all family order; which is disorder and profaneness.. Is it lawful to rob God of his ordinary sacrifices, for the sake of your pleasure, diversion, and jollity? Are you of that mind, that it is a decent thing, that the stated worship of the great God, should give way to your mirth, and your diversions? Is this the way of

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God's holy children? Those works that are commonly done in the dead of night, seem to have a black mark set upon them by the apostle, and Christians are exhorted to avoid them, Rom. xiii. 12, 13. "Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness; not in chambering and wantonness." The word here rendered *rioting* is of far different signification from the term, as used in our laws: for the forcible doing an unlawful thing, by three or more persons assembled together for that purpose. But the word here properly signifies, a *disorderly convention* of persons in order to spend their time together in pleasure and jollity. So the word is commonly used in scripture. Prov. xxiii. 20. "Be not amongst riotous eaters of flesh." Prov. xxviii. 7. "He that is a companion of riotous men, shameth his father." Luke xv. 13.—"wasted his substance with riotous living."—Again, a black mark seems to be set on such in scripture, as in 1 Thess. v. 5—8. "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night."

Many of you that have lately set up this practice of frolicking and jollity, *profess* to be children of the light and of the day! and not to be the children of darkness. Therefore *walk as in the day*; and do not those works of darkness, that are commonly done at unseasonable hours of the night. Such things are not only condemned by the apostle, but are looked upon as infamous in all ages among sober people, as all past writings manifest. Therefore it is a thing of bad report, and so forbidden. Phil. iv. 8. *Whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue—any praise, think on these things.*"

Objection. But the wise man allows of this practice, when he says, Eccles. iii. 4, "There is a time to mourn, and a time to dance."

Answer. This is nothing to the purpose; for the utmost that any can pretend that it proves, is that it may be used under some circumstances; but not at all, that dancing and other things used by our young people in their frolicks are lawful, in those circumstances: any more than what is said in the same chapter, verse 3,—"*there is a time to kill*," proves that it is lawful for a man to commit murder.—To deny that dancing, under any circumstances whatever, was lawful, would be absurd; for there was a religious dancing in the Jewish church which was a way of expressing their spiritual

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mirth. So David danced before the Lord. And he calls upon others to praise God in the dance. So there may be other circumstances wherein dancing may not be unlawful. But all this makes nothing to the present purpose; to prove that this particular custom is not of a bad tendency. Besides, when the wise man says, "there is a time to dance," that does not prove, that the dead of the night is the time for it. The same wise man doth not justify carnal mirth, but condemns it. Eccl. ii. 2. "I said of laughter, it is mad; and of mirth, what doth it?"

OBJECTION. If we avoid all such things, it will be the way for our young people to be ignorant how to behave themselves in company.

ANSWER. But consider what this objection comes to. It certainly comes to this, *viz.* That the pouring out of the Spirit of God upon a people, tends to banish all good conduct, good breeding, and decent behaviour from among them; and to sink them down into clownishness and barbarity! The Spirit of God did actually put an end to this practice among us.—But who is not ashamed to make such an objection? Will any of our young converts talk thus? Will you, that think you were converted by the late pouring out of the Spirit of God, and are made holy persons, heirs of eternal life, talk so blasphemously of it?

If our young people are resolute still to go on notwithstanding all that has been said, I hope that those of them who call themselves converted, will first find out some rational, satisfying answer to the arguments that have been used against it. This at least may be reasonably expected of them, seeing they make such a profession. You have this day been partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and therein solemnly renewed your profession.—If after such light set before you, and such mercy given, you will go on, Be it known to you, that your eating now, and at other times, will prove only an eating and drinking judgment to yourselves.

And I desire heads of families, if they have any government over their children, or any command of their own houses, would not tolerate their children in such practices, nor suffer such conventions in their houses.—I do not desire that young people should be abridged of any lawful and proper liberties. But this custom can be of no benefit or service in the world: it tends only to mischief.—Satan doubtless would be glad to have such an interest amongst us as he used to have; and is therefore striving to steal in, while we are sleeping: but let us rouse up ourselves, and vigorously oppose his encroachments. I shall repeat those words of the apostle,

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Rom. xiii. 12—14, and leave them to the serious consideration of all persons, old and young. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

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SERMON V.

THE PRECIOUSNESS OF TIME,

AND

THE IMPORTANCE OF REDEEMING IT.

EPH. v. 16.

Redeeming the time.

CHRISTIANS should not only study to improve the opportunities they enjoy, for their *own* advantage, as those who would make a good bargain; but also labour to reclaim *others* from their evil courses; that so God might defer his anger, and time might be redeemed from that terrible destruction, which, when it should come, would put an end to the time of divine patience. And it may be upon this account, that this reason is added, *Because the days are evil.* As if the apostle had said, the corruption of the times tends to hasten threatened judgments; but your holy and circumspect walk will tend to redeem time from the devouring jaws of those calamities.—However, thus much is certainly held forth to us in the words; *viz.* That upon time we should set a high value, and be exceeding careful that it be not lost; and we are therefore exhorted to exercise wisdom and circumspection, in order that we may redeem it. And hence it appears, that *Time is exceedingly precious.*

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SECT. I.

Why time is precious.

Time is precious for the following reasons.

1. Because a happy or miserable eternity depends on the good or ill improvement of it. Things are precious in proportion to their importance, or to the degree wherein they concern our welfare. Men are wont to set the highest value on those things upon which they are sensible their interest chiefly depends. And this renders time so exceedingly precious, because our eternal welfare depends on the improvement of it.—Indeed our welfare in *this* world depends upon its improvement. If we improve it not, we shall be in danger of coming to poverty and disgrace; but by a good improvement of it, we may obtain those things which will be useful and comfortable. But it is above all things precious, as our state through eternity depends upon it. The importance of the improvement of time upon other accounts, is in subordination to this.

Gold and silver are esteemed precious by men; but they are of no worth to any man, only as thereby he hath an opportunity of avoiding or removing some evil, or of possessing himself of some good. And the greater the evil is which any man hath advantage to escape, or the good which he hath advantage to obtain, by any thing that he possesses, by so much the greater is the value of that thing to him, whatever it be. Thus if a man, by any thing which he hath, may save his life, which he must lose without it, he will look upon that by which he hath the opportunity of escaping so great an evil as death, to be very precious. —Hence it is that time is so exceedingly precious, because by it we have opportunity of escaping everlasting misery, and of obtaining everlasting blessedness and glory. On this depends our escape from an infinite evil, and our attainment of an infinite good.

2. Time is very short, which is another thing that renders it very precious. The scarcity of any commodity occasions men to set a higher value upon it, especially if it be necessary and they cannot do without it. Thus when Samaria was besieged by the Syrians, and provisions were exceedingly scarce, "an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver." 2 Kings vi. 25. So time is the more to be prized by men, because a whole eternity depends upon it; and yet we have but a little of time. "When a few years

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are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return." Job xvi. 22. "My days are swifter than a post: They are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle that hasteth to the prey." Job. ix. 25, 26. "Our life; what is it? it is but a vapour which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Jam. iv. 14. It is but as a moment to eternity. Time is so short, and the work which we have to do in it is so great, that we have none of it to spare. The work which we have to do to prepare for eternity, must be done in time, or it never can be done; and it is found to be a work of great difficulty and labour, and therefore that for which time is the more requisite.

3. Time ought to be esteemed by us very precious because we are uncertain of its continuance. We know that it is very short, but we know not how short. We know not how little of it remains, whether a year, or several years, or only a month, a week, or a day. We are every day uncertain whether that day will not be the last, or whether we are to have the whole day. There is nothing that experience doth more verify than this.—If a man had but little provision laid up for a journey or a voyage, and at the same time knew that if his provision should fail, he must perish by the way, he would be the more choice of it.—How much more would many men prize their time, if they knew that they had but a few months, or a few days more to live? And certainly a wise man will prize his time the more, as he knows not but that it will be so as to himself. This is the case with multitudes now in the world, who at present enjoy health, and see no signs of approaching death: many such, no doubt, are to die the next month, many the next week, yea, many probably to-morrow, and some this night; yet these same persons know nothing of it, and perhaps think nothing of it, and neither they nor their neighbours can say that they are more likely soon to be taken out of the world than others. This teaches us how we ought to prize our time, and how careful we ought to be, that we lose none of it.

4. Time is very precious, because when it is past, it cannot be recovered. There are many things which men possess, which if they part with, they can obtain them again. If a man have parted with something which he had, not knowing the worth of it, or the need he should have of it; he often can regain it, at least with pains and cost. If a man have been overseen in a bargain, and have bartered away or sold something, and afterwards repent of it, he may often obtain a release, and recover what he had parted with.—But it is not so with respect to time; when once that is gone, it is gone for ever; no pains, no cost will recover it. Though we repent ever so much that we let it pass,

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and did not improve it while we had it, it will be to no purpose. Every part of it is successively offered to us, that we may choose, whether we will make it our own, or not. But there is no delay; it will not wait upon us to see whether or no we will comply with the offer. But if we refuse it is immediately taken away, and never offered more. As to that part of time which is gone, however we have neglected to improve it, it is out of our possession and out of our reach.

If we have lived fifty, or sixty, or seventy years, and have not improved our time, now it cannot be helped; it is eternally gone from us: all that we can do, is to improve the little that remains. Yea, if a man have spent all his life but a few moments unimproved, all that is gone is lost, and only those few remaining moments can possibly be made his own; and if the whole of a man's time be gone, and it be all lost, it is irrecoverable.—Eternity depends on the improvement of time! but when once the time of life is gone, when once death is come, we have no more to do with time; there is no possibility of obtaining the restoration of it, or another space in which to prepare for eternity. If a man should lose the whole of his worldly substance, and become a bankrupt, it is possible that his loss may be made up. He may have another estate as good. But when the time of life is gone, it is impossible that we should ever obtain another such time. All opportunity of obtaining eternal welfare is utterly and everlastingly gone.

SECT. II.

Reflections on Time past.

You have now heard of the preciousness of time; and you are the persons concerned, to whom God hath committed that precious talent. You have an eternity before you. When God created you, and gave you reasonable souls, he made you for an endless duration. He gave you time here, in order to a preparation for eternity, and your future eternity depends on the improvement of time.—Consider, therefore, what you have done with your *past* time. You are not now beginning your time, but a great deal is past and gone; and all the wit, and power, and treasure of the universe, cannot recover it. Many of you may well conclude, that more than half of your time is gone; though you should live to the ordinary age of man, your glass is more than half run; and it may be there are but few sands remaining. Your sun is past the meridian, and perhaps just setting, or

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going into an everlasting eclipse. Consider, therefore, what account you can give of your improvement of past time. How have you let the precious golden sands of your glass run?

Every *day* that you have enjoyed has been precious; yea, your *moments* have been precious. But have you not wasted your precious moments, your precious days, yea, your precious years? If you should reckon up how many days you have lived, what a sum would there be! and how precious hath every one of those days been! Consider, therefore, what have you done with them. What is become of them all? What can you shew of any improvement made, or good done, or benefit obtained, answerable to all this time which you have lived? When you look back, and search, do you not find this past time of your lives in a great measure empty, having not been filled up with any good improvement? And if God, that hath given you your time, should now call you to an account, what account could you give to him?

How much may be done in a year! how much good is there opportunity to do in such a space of time! How much service may persons do for God, and how much for their own souls, if to their utmost they improve it! How much may be done in a day! But what have you done in so many days and years that you have lived? What have you done with the whole time of your youth, you that are past your youth? What is become of all that precious season of life? Hath it not all been vain to you? Would it not have been as well or better for you, if all that time you had been asleep, or in a state of non-existence?

You have had much time of leisure and freedom from worldly business; consider to what purpose you have spent it. You have not only had ordinary time, but you have had a great deal of holy time. What have you done with all the Sabbath-days which you have enjoyed? Consider those things seriously, and let your own consciences make answer.

SECT. III.

Who are chiefly deserving of reproof from the subject of the preciousness of time.

How little is the preciousness of time considered, and how little sense of it do the greater part of mankind seem to have! and to how little good purpose do many spend their time! There is nothing more precious, and yet nothing of which men are more prodigal. Time is with many, as silver

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was in the days of Solomon, *as the stones of the street, and nothing accounted of*. They act as if time were as plenty as silver was then, and as if they had a great deal more than they needed, and knew not what to do with it. If men were as lavish of their money as they are of their time; if it were as common a thing for them to throw away their money, as it is for them to throw away their time, we should think them beside themselves, and not in the possession of their right minds. Yet time is a thousand times more precious than money; and when it is gone, cannot be *purchased for money*, cannot be redeemed by silver or gold.—There are several sorts of persons who are reproved by this doctrine, whom I shall particularly mention.

1. Those who spend a great part of their time in *idleness*, or in doing nothing that turns to any account, either for the good of their souls or bodies; nothing either for their own benefit, or for the benefit of their neighbour, either of the family or of the body-politic to which they belong. There are some persons upon whose hands time seems to lie heavy, who, instead of being concerned to improve it as it passes, and taking care that it pass not without making it their own, act as if it were rather their concern to contrive ways how to waste and consume it; as though time, instead of being precious, were rather a mere incumbrance to them. Their hands refuse to labour, and rather than put themselves to it, they will let their families suffer, and will suffer themselves: Prov. xix. 15. "An idle soul shall suffer hunger." Prov. xxii. 21. "Drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags."

Some spend much of their time at the tavern, over their cups, and in wandering about from house to house, wasting away their hours in idle and unprofitable talk which will turn to no good account: Prov. xiv. 23. "In all labour there is profit; but the talk of the lips tendeth only to poverty." The direction of the apostle, in Eph. iv. 28, is, that we should "labour, working with our hands the thing that is good, that we may have to give to him that needeth." But indolent men, instead of gaining any thing to give to him that needeth, do but waste what they have already: Prov. xviii. 9. "He that is slothful in his work, is brother to him that is a great waster."

2. They are reproved by this doctrine who spend their time in *wickedness*, who do not merely spend their time in doing nothing to any good purpose, but spend it to ill purposes. Such do not only lose their time, but they do worse; with it they hurt both themselves and others.—Time is precious, as we have heard, because eternity depends upon it. By the improvement of time, we have opportunity of

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escaping eternal misery, and obtaining eternal blessedness. But those who spend their time in wicked works, not only neglect to improve their time to obtain eternal happiness, or to escape damnation, but they spend it to a quite contrary purpose, *viz.* to increase their eternal misery, or to render their damnation the more heavy and intolerable.

Some spend much time in revelling, and in unclean talk and practices, in vicious company-keeping, in corrupting and ensnaring the minds of others, setting bad examples, and leading others into sin, undoing not only their own souls, but the souls of others. Some spend much of their precious time in detraction and backbiting; in talking against others; in contention, not only quarrelling themselves, but fomenting and stirring up strife and contention. It would have been well for some men, and well for their neighbours, if they had never done any thing at all; for then they would have done neither good nor hurt. But now they have done a great deal more hurt than they have done or ever will do good. There are some persons whom it would have been better for the towns where they live, to have been at the charge of maintaining them in doing nothing, if that would have kept them in a state of inactivity.

Those who have spent much of their time in wickedness, if ever, they shall reform, and enter upon a different mode of living, will find, not only that they have wasted the past, but that they have made work for their remaining time, to undo what they have done. How will many men, when they shall have done with time, and shall look back upon their past lives, wish that they had had no time! The time which they spend on earth will be worse to them than if they had spent so much time in hell; for an eternity of more dreadful misery in hell will be the fruit of their time on earth, as they employ it.

3. Those are reproved by this doctrine, who spend their time only in *worldly* pursuits, neglecting their souls. Such men lose their time, let them be ever so diligent in their worldly business; and though they may be careful not to let any of it pass so, but that it shall, some way or other, turn to their worldly profit. They that improve time only for their benefit in time, lose it; because time was not given for itself, but for that everlasting duration which succeeds it.—They, therefore, whose time is taking up in caring and labouring for the world only, in inquiring what they shall eat, and what they shall drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed; in contriving to lay up for themselves treasures upon earth, how to enrich themselves, how to make themselves great in the world, or how to live in comfortable and pleasant circumstances, while here; who busy their minds and employ their strength in these things only, and the stream of whose

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affections is directed towards these things; they lose their precious time.

Let such, therefore, as have been guilty of thus spending their time, consider it. You have spent a great part of your time, and a great part of your strength, in getting a little of the world; and how little good doth it afford you, now you have gotten it! What happiness or satisfaction can you reap from it? will it give you peace of conscience, or any rational quietness or comfort? What is your poor, needy perishing soul the better for it? and what better prospects doth it afford you of your approaching eternity? and what will all that you have acquired avail you when time shall be no longer.

SECT. IV.

An Exhortation to improve Time.

Consider what hath been said of the preciousness of time, how much depends upon it, how short and uncertain it is, how irrecoverable will it be when gone. If you have a right conception of these things, you will be more choice of your time than of the most fine gold. Every hour and moment will seem precious to you.—But besides those considerations which have been already set before you, consider also the following.

1. That you are accountable to God for your time. Time is a talent given us by God; he hath set us our day; and it is not for nothing, our day was appointed for some work; therefore he will, at the day's end, call us to an account. We must give account to him of the improvement of all our time. We are God's servants; as a servant is accountable to his master, how he spends his time when he is sent forth to work, so are we accountable to God. If men would aright consider this, and keep it in mind, would they not improve their time otherwise than they do? Would you not behave otherwise than you do, if you considered with yourselves every morning that you must give an account to God, how you shall have spent that day? and if you considered with yourselves, at the beginning of every evening, that you must give an account to God, how you shall have spent that evening? Christ hath told us, that "for every idle word which men speak, they shall give account in the day of judgment," Matt. xii. 36. How well, therefore, may we conclude, that we must give an account of all our idle mis-spent time!

2. Consider how much time you have lost already. For your having lost so much, you have the greater need of

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diligently improving what yet remains. You ought to mourn and lament over your lost time; but that is not all, you must apply yourselves the more diligently to improve the remaining part, that you may redeem lost time.—You who are considerably advanced in life, and have hitherto spent your time in vanities and worldly cares, and have lived in a great measure negligent of the interests of your souls, may well be terrified and amazed, when you think how much time you have lost and wasted away.—In that you have lost so much time, you have the more need of diligence, on three accounts.

(1.) As your opportunity is so much the shorter.—Your time at its whole length is short. But set aside all that you have already lost, and then how much shorter is it! As to that part of your time which you have already lost, it is not to be reckoned into your opportunity; for that will never be any more; and it is no better, but worse to you, than if it never had been.

(2.) You have the same work to do that you had at first, and that under greater difficulties. Hitherto you have done nothing at all of your work, all remains to be done, and that with vastly greater difficulties and opposition in your way than would have been if you had set about it seasonably. So that the time in which to do your work is not only grown shorter, but your work is grown greater. You not only have the *same* work to do, but you have *more* work; for while you have lost your time, you have not only shortened it, but you have been making work for yourselves. How well may this consideration awaken you to a thorough care, not to let things run on in this manner any longer, and rouse you up immediately to apply yourselves to your work with all your might?

(3.) That is the best of your time which you have lost. The first of a man's time, after he comes to the exercise of his reason, and to be capable of performing his work, is the best. You have lived in sin till past your youth, have lost the best part. So that here are all these things to be considered together, *viz.* that your time in the whole is but short, there is none to spare; a great part of that is gone, so that it is become much shorter; that which is gone is the best; yet all your work remains: and not only so, but with greater difficulties than ever before attended it; and the shorter your time is, the more work you have to do.

What will make you sensible of the necessity of a diligent improvement of remaining time, if these things will not? Sometimes such considerations as these have another effect, *viz.* to discourage persons, and to make them think, that seeing they have lost so much time, it is not worth their while to attempt to do any thing now. The devil makes fools of them; for when they are young, he tells them, there is

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time enough hereafter, there is no need of being in haste, it will be better seeking salvation hereafter, and then they believe him. Afterwards when their youth is past, he tells them, that now they have lost so much, and the best of their time, that it is not worth their while to attempt to do any thing; and now they believe him too. So that with them no time is good. The season of youth is not a good time; for that is most fit for pleasure and mirth, and there will be enough afterwards; and what comes afterwards is not a good time, because the best of it is gone. Thus are men infatuated and ruined.

But what madness is it for persons to give way to discouragement, so as to neglect their work, because their time is short! What need have they rather to awake out of sleep, thoroughly to rouse up themselves, and to be in good earnest, that if possible they may yet obtain eternal life! Peradventure, God may yet give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth, that they may be saved. Though it be late in the day, yet God calls upon you to rouse, and to apply yourselves to your work; and will you not hearken to *his* counsel in this great affair, rather than to the counsel of your mortal enemy?

3. Consider how time is sometimes valued by those who are come near to the end of it. What a sense of its preciousness have poor sinners sometimes, when they are on their death-beds! Such have cried out, *Oh, a thousand worlds for an inch of time!* Then time appears to them indeed precious. An inch of time could do them no more good than before, when they were in health, supposing a like disposition to improve it, nor indeed so much; for a man's time upon a death-bed is attended with far greater disadvantage for such an improvement as will be for the good of his soul, than when he is in health. But the near approach of death makes men sensible of the inestimable worth of time. Perhaps, when they were in health, they were as insensible of its value as you are, and were as negligent of it. But how are their thoughts altered now! It is not because they are deceived, that they think time to be of such value, but because their eyes are opened; and it is because you are deceived and blind, that you do not think as they do.

4. Consider what a value we may conclude is set upon time by those who are past the end of it. What thoughts do you think they have of its preciousness, who have lost all their opportunity for obtaining eternal life, and are gone to hell? Though they were very lavish of their time while they lived, and set no great value upon it, yet how have they changed their judgments! How would they value the opportunity which *you* have, if they might but have it granted to

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them? What would they not give for one of your days, under the means of grace!—So will you, first or last, be convinced. But if you be not convinced except in the manner in which they are, it will be too late.

There are two ways of making men sensible of the preciousness of time. One is, by shewing them the reason why it must be precious, by telling them how much depends on it, how short it is, how uncertain, &c. The other is experience, wherein men are convinced how much depends on the improvement of time. The latter is the most effectual way; for that always convinces, if nothing else doth.—But if persons be not convinced by the former means, the latter will do them no good. If the former be ineffectual, the latter, though it be certain, yet is always too late. Experience never fails to open the eyes of men, though they were never opened before. But if they be first opened by that, it is no way to their benefit. Let all therefore be persuaded to improve their time to their utmost.

SECT. V.

Advice respecting the improvement of Time.

I SHALL conclude with advising to three things in particular:—

1. Improve the *present* time without any delay. If you delay and put off its improvement, still more time will be lost; and it will be an evidence that you are not sensible of its preciousness. Talk not of more convenient seasons hereafter; but improve your time while you have it, after the example of the Psalmist, Psalm cxix. 60. "I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments."

2. Be especially careful to improve *those parts* of time which are most precious. Though all time is very precious, yet some parts are more precious than others; as, particularly, holy time is more precious than common time. Such time is of great advantage for our everlasting welfare; therefore, above all, improve your Sabbaths, and especially the time of public worship, which is the most precious part. Lose it not either in sleep, or in carelessness, inattention, and wandering imaginations. How sottish are they who waste away not only their common, but holy time, yea, the very season of attendance on the holy ordinances of God!—The time of youth is precious, on many accounts. Therefore, if you be in the enjoyment of this time, take heed that you improve it. Let not the precious days and years of youth slip away without improvement. A time of the strivings of God's spirit

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is more precious than other time. Then God is near; and we are directed, in Isa. lv. 6, "To seek the Lord while he may be found, and to call upon him while he is near." Such especially is an accepted time, and a day of salvation: 2 Cor. vi. 2. "I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in a day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

3. Improve well your time of *leisure* from worldly business. Many persons have a great deal of such time, and all have some. If men be but disposed to it, such time may be improved to great advantage. When we are most free from cares for the body, and business of an outward nature, an happy opportunity for the soul is afforded. Therefore spend not such opportunities unprofitably, nor in such a manner that you will not be able to give a good account thereof to God. Waste them not away wholly in unprofitable visits, or useless diversions or amusements. Diversion should be used only in subserviency to business. So much, and no more should be used, as doth most fit the mind and body for the work of our general and particular callings.

You have need to improve every talent, advantage, and opportunity, to your utmost, while time lasts; for it will soon be said concerning you, according to the oath of the angel, in Rev. x. 5, 6, "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea and the things which are therein, *That there should be time no longer*."

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SERMON VI.

PROCRASTINATION;

OR,

THE SIN AND FOLLY OF DEPENDING ON FUTURE TIME.

PROV. XXVII. 1.

Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

THE design of the wise man, in this book of Proverbs, is to give us the precepts of true wisdom, or to teach us how to conduct ourselves wisely in the course of our lives. Wisdom very much consists in making a wise improvement of time, and of the opportunities we enjoy. This is often in scripture spoken of as a great part of true wisdom; as Deut. xxxii. 29. "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" And, Psalm. xc. 12. "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." So the wisdom of the wise virgins is represented as consisting much in this, that they improved the proper season to buy oil.

Therefore the wise man, in these books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, agreeably to his design, insists on this part of wisdom. He tells us the advantage of seeking Christ early; Prov. viii. 17. And advises us *to do what our hand findeth to do, with our might;* Eccles. ix. 10. He advises young people to remember their Creator in the days of their youth, while the evil days come not, in which they shall say they have no pleasure; Eccles. xii. 1. So here he advises us to a wise

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improvement of the present season.——In the words are two things to be particularly observed.

1. The precept, *not to boast of to-morrow;* i. e. not to speak or act as though it were our own. It is absurd for men to boast of that which is not theirs. The wise man would not have us behave ourselves as though any time were ours, but the present. He that boasts of to-morrow, acts as though he had to-morrow in his possession, or had something whereby he might depend on it, and call it his own.

2. The reason given for this precept; *for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.* It is a good reason why we should not behave ourselves as though the morrow were our own, that indeed it is not; we are not sure of it; we have no hold of future time; we know not whether we shall see the morrow: or if we do know that we shall see it, we know not what we shall see on it.—Hence, we ought to behave ourselves every day, as though we had no dependence on any other.

SECT. I.

Needful Precautions.

To prevent a misunderstanding of the doctrine, I observe, that it is not meant, that we should in every respect behave as though we knew that we should not live another day. Not depending on another day, is a different thing from concluding, that we shall not live another day. We may have reason for the one, and not for the other. We have good reason not to depend on another day, but we have no reason to conclude, that we shall not live another day.

In some respects we ought to carry ourselves as though we knew we should not live another day, and should improve every day as if it were the last. Particularly, we should live every day as conscientiously and as holily as if we knew it were the last. We should be as careful every day to avoid all sin, as if we knew that that night our souls should be required of us. We should be as careful to do every duty which God requires of us, and take as much care that we have a good account to give to our Judge, of our improvement of that day, as if we concluded that we must be called to give an account before another day.

But in many other respects, we are not obliged to behave ourselves as though we concluded that we should not live to another day. If we had reason to conclude that we should not live another day, some things would not be our duty which now are our duty. As for instance, in such a case it would not be the duty of any person to make provision for

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his temporal subsistence during another day: to neglect which, as things now are, would be very imprudent and foolish, as the consequences would shew, if every man were to act in this manner. If so, it would never be man's duty to plough or sow the field, or to lay up for winter; but these things are man's duty; as Prov. vi. 6—8. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise; which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest." And chap. x. 5, &c. "He that gathereth in the summer is a wise son; but he that sleepeth in harvest, is a son that causeth shame." And many other places might be mentioned.

So, on the other hand, if we were certain that we should not live another day, some things would be our duty to-day, which now are not so. As for instance, it would be proper for us to spend our time in giving our dying counsels, and in setting our houses in order. If it were revealed to us, that we should die before to-morrow morning, we ought to look upon it as a call of God to us, to spend the short remainder of our lives in those things which immediately concern our departure, more than otherwise it would be our duty to do.—Therefore, the words which forbid us to boast of to-morrow, cannot be extended so far as to signify, that we ought *in all respects* to live, as if we knew we should not see another day. Yet they undoubtedly mean, that we ought not to behave ourselves in any respect, as though we *depended* on another day.

SECT. II.

The Precept explained.

Boast not thyself of to-morrow. In this precept two things seem to be forbidden.

1. Boasting ourselves of what shall be on the morrow, or behaving ourselves as though we depended on particular things to come to pass in this world, in some future time. As when men behave themselves, as though they depended on being rich, or promoted to honour hereafter; or as though they were sure of accomplishing any particular design another day. So did the rich man in the gospel, when he did not only promise himself, that he should live many years, but promised himself also, that he should be rich many years. Hence he said to his soul, that *he had much goods laid up for many years.*

And if men act as though they depended upon it, that they should another day accomplish such and such things

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for their souls, then may they be said to boast themselves of to-morrow, and not to behave themselves as though they depended on no other day. As when they behave themselves, as though they depended upon it, that they should at another day have such and such advantages for the good of their souls; that they should at another day have the strivings of God's spirit; that they should at another day find themselves disposed to be thorough in seeking their salvation; that they should at another day have a more convenient season; and that God at another day would stand ready to hear their prayers, and shew them mercy.

Or if they act as though they depended upon it that they should have considerable opportunity on a death-bed to seek mercy; or whatever they promise themselves shall come to pass respecting them in this world, if they act as depending on it, they boast themselves of to-morrow.

2. Another thing implied, is our boasting of future time itself, or acting as though we depended on it, that we should have our lives continued to see another day. Not only is the command of God delivered in the text transgressed by those who behave themselves as depending upon it, that they shall see and obtain such and such things to-morrow: but by those who act as depending upon it, that they shall remain in being in this world to-morrow.

Both these ways of boasting of to-morrow are reproved by the apostle James, chap. iv. 13. "Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain." By promising themselves that they shall do such and such things, and that they shall get gain, they boast themselves of what shall come to pass in such a time. The apostle in the next verse teaches them, that they ought not to do this, no nor so much as depend upon seeing another day, or on having their lives continued, ver. 14. "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow: For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." And in ver. 15, he teaches us that both are uncertain and dependent on the will of God, *viz.* Whether we shall live another day, and if we do, whether such and such things shall come to pass. "For that you ought to say, if the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that." Therefore he adds in ver. 16, "But now you rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil."

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SECT. III.

When men act as though they depend on another day.

1. THEY will do so, if they *set their hearts* on the enjoyments of this life. I mean not, if they have any manner of affection to them. We may have some affection to the enjoyments of this world: otherwise they would cease to be enjoyments. If we might have no degree of rejoicing in them, we could not be thankful for them. Persons may in a degree take delight in earthly friends, and other earthly enjoyments. It is agreeable to the wise man's advice that we should do so, Eccles. v. 18. "It is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all this labour that he taketh under the sun."—But by setting our hearts on these things, by placing our happiness on them, and letting out the current of our affections after them—by turning and fixing our inclinations so much upon them, that we cannot well enjoy ourselves without them, so that very much of the strength of the faculties of our minds is employed and taken up about these things—we shew that we have our dependence on another day.

The man who doth thus, acts as though he depended on another day, yea many other days, in the world: For it is most evident, that if the enjoyments of this world be of such a nature that they are not to be depended on for one day more, they are not worth the setting of our hearts upon them, or the placing of our happiness in them. We may rejoice in the enjoyments of the world, but not in such a manner as to place the rest of our souls in them. As the apostle saith, we should rejoice in them as though we rejoiced not, 1 Cor. vii. 30. So that if this joy should fail, our stock may hold good; and in this case we must behave ourselves only as if we had lost a small stream of joy, but still had the fountain in full possession. We should conduct ourselves as those who have not the foundation of their joy shaken, though some appurtenances have failed. Our happiness as to *the body* of it, if I may so speak, should yet stand as on an immoveable foundation.

They who are very much pleased and elated with the enjoyments of the world, certainly behave themselves as though they had much dependence on their continuance for more than one or two days more.—They who addict themselves to vain mirth, and lead a jovial life, shew that they set their hearts on the enjoyments of the world, and act as those who depend on more days than the present. For if they were

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sensible that they could not depend on any future time, but that death would put an eternal end to all their carnal mirth before to-morrow, they would have no heart to spend the present day in such a manner as they now do. It would immediately produce in them a disposition far from levity and vanity.

And when persons are very much sunk with the loss of any temporal enjoyments, or with any temporal disappointments, it shews that they set their hearts upon them, and behave as though they boasted of to-morrow, and depended on their long continuance in life. If they had no such dependence, they would not be frustrated, or would not be overwhelmed by their frustration. If they be very much sunk, and the comfort of their lives be destroyed by it, it shews that those temporal enjoyments were too much the foundation on which their comfort stood. That which makes a building totter, and threatens its destruction, is not the taking away of some of the exterior parts of the superstructure, but the removal of some considerable part of the foundation on which the house stands.

2. If men are proud of *their worldly circumstances*, it shews that they have a dependence on to-morrow; for no man would think it worth his while to vaunt himself in that which is to be depended on only for a day. Though a man have a great estate to-day, he will not be puffed up with it, unless he depend upon having it to-morrow. A man who hath no dependence, but that he may to-morrow be in the grave, where the small and great are upon a level, Job iii. 19, will not be much lifted up with his advancement to a post of honour.

That person will not be proud of his rich and fine clothes, who is sensible that he may be stripped by death to-morrow, and sent out of the world, as he came naked into it. He will not to-day be very proud of his personal beauty, who hath no dependence on escaping to-morrow that stroke of death which will mar all his beauty, and make that face which he now thinks so comely, appear ghastly and horrid; when instead of a ruddy and florid countenance, there will be the blood settled, cold and congealed, the flesh stiff and clayed, the teeth set, the eyes fixed and sunk into the head. Nor will he to-day very much affect to beautify and adorn with gaudy and flaunting apparel, that body concerning which he is sensible that it may be wrapped in a winding-sheet to-morrow, to be carried to the grave, there to rot, and be covered and filled with worms.

3. When men envy others their worldly enjoyments, their wealth, their worldly ease, or their titles and high places—their sensual pleasures, or any of their worldly circumstances

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—it shews, that they set their hearts on the things of the world; and that they are not sensible that these things are not to be depended upon for another day. If they were, they would not think them worth their envy. They would appear so worthless in their eyes, that they would not care who had them, nor who went without them.—So when they contend about worldly possessions and enjoyments, (as almost all the contentions that are in the world are about these things,) it shews that they have dependence on to-morrow; otherwise they would not think the enjoyments of the world worth contending about. They would be very much of the temper recommended by Jesus Christ, Matth. v. 40. "He that will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also."

4. Men behave themselves as if they depended on another day, when they rest at ease to-day, in a condition out of which they must be delivered before they die. When a man's mind is at rest, there is something that he rests in: it must have some foundation, either real or imaginary. But if the man be in a condition from which he is sensible he must some time or other be delivered, or be undone, it is impossible that he should rest in the thoughts of remaining in his condition always, and never being delivered from it: for no man is willing to be ruined; no man can rest in that which he conceives to be connected with his own misery and undoing.—Therefore, if he rest in such a condition for the present, it must be on a supposition, that he shall be delivered from it. If he rest in it to-day, it must be because he depends on being delivered *another* day, and therefore depends on seeing another day.

We in this land generally profess, that as we are by nature sinful, we are exposed to eternal death, and that therefore there is a necessity that we get out of a natural condition some time before we die. And those among us who are sensible that they have never passed through any such change as in scripture is called a *being born again*, though they be not sufficiently convinced that there is any such place as hell, yet have a kind of belief of it; at least they do not conclude, that there is no such place, and therefore cannot but be sensible that it would be dreadful to die unconverted. Therefore, if they be in a considerable degree of ease and quietness in their condition, it must be because they have a dependence on being delivered out of such a condition some time before they die.

In as much as they are easy, remaining in such a condition to-day, without any prospect of present deliverance, it shews plainly that they depend on another day. If they did not, they could have no quietness in their spirits; because, if there

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be no grounds of dependence on any further opportunity, then what they are exposed to, by missing the opportunity which they have to-day, is infinitely dreadful.—Persons who are secure in their sins, under the light of the gospel, unless they be deceived with a false hope, are generally so, because they boast themselves of to-morrow. They depend on future opportunity; they flatter themselves with hopes of living long in the world; they depend on what shall come to pass hereafter; they depend on the fulfilment of their good intentions as to what they will do at a more convenient season.

5. Men behave themselves as those who depend on another day, when they neglect any thing to-day which must be done before they die. If there be any thing which is absolutely necessary to be done some time before death, and the necessity of it be sufficiently declared and shewn to the person for whom it is thus necessary; if he neglect setting about it immediately, sincerely, and with all his might, certainly it carries this face with it, that the man depends upon its being done hereafter, and consequently that he shall have opportunity to do it.—Because, as to those things which are absolutely necessary to be done, there is need, not only of a possibility of a future opportunity; but of something which is to be depended on, some good ground to conclude that we shall have future opportunity; therefore, whoever lives under the gospel, and does not this day thoroughly reform his life, by casting away every abomination, and denying every lust—and doth not apply himself to the practice of the whole of his duty towards God and man, and begin to make religion his main business—he acts as one who depends on another day; because he is abundantly taught that these things must be done before he dies.

Those who have been seeking salvation for a great while, in a dull, insincere, and slightly manner, and find no good effect of it, have abundant reason to conclude, that some time before they die, they must not only seek, but strive to enter in at the straight gate, and must be violent for the kingdom of heaven; and therefore, if they do not begin thus to-day, they act as those who depend on another day. So those who have hitherto lived in the neglect of some particular known duty, whether it be secret prayer, or paying some old debt, which they have long owed to their neighbour—or the duty of confessing some fault to a brother who hath aught against them, or of making restitution for some injury—they act as those who depend on another day.

6. Men behave themselves as though they depended on another day, if they do that to-day which some time or other must be undone. There are many things done by men which must be undone by them. They must go back again from

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the way which they have gone, or they are ruined to all eternity. Therefore, in doing these things, they act as those who depend on future opportunity to undo them: As when a man cheats or defrauds his neighbour in any thing, he acts as one that boasts of to-morrow: for he must undo what he doth before he dies; he must some time or other make restitution, or divine justice, which oversees all things, and governs the whole world, and will see to it that right be done, will not let go its hold of him.

So when men hearken to temptation, and yield to the solicitations of their lusts to commit any sin, they act as those who depend on another day. They do what must be undone. What they then do must be undone by hearty and thorough repentance, or they are ruined and lost for ever. So if persons have been seeking salvation for a time, and afterwards are guilty of backsliding, and turn back after their hands have been put to the plough, they act as those who depend on another day. For what they now do, they must undo some time or other; they must go back again from their backsliding, and have all their work to do over again. And these things must be undone in this world, while men live; for there will be no undoing of them afterwards; they may be suffered for, but never can be undone.

SECT. IV.

Why we ought not to boast of to-morrow.

I COME now to shew, why we ought not thus to boast ourselves of to-morrow; but on the contrary, to behave ourselves every day as though we had no dependence on another. And there is this plain and sufficient REASON for it, *viz.* That we have no grounds of dependence on another day. We have neither any foundation to depend upon seeing any particular things come to pass another day, which we may hope or wish for, nor upon enjoying another day in this world. We have nothing for a foundation of dependence that we shall not be in eternity before to-morrow, as both reason and experience shew. We have no promise of God that we shall ever see another day. We are in God's hands; our lives are in his hands; he hath set our bounds; the number of our months and days are with him; nor hath he told them to us. We see that the life of man at longest is very short, and nothing is more uncertain; and it is a thing universal among mankind, that they know not the day of their death. We see that great natural abilities, and sharpness of wit, and clearness of discernment, do not help to any discovery in this matter.

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Wise men are as uncertain of the term of their lives as others.

There are so many ways and means whereby the lives of men come to an end, that no circumstances in which a man can be are any security to him from death. That it is but a very little while till to-morrow, is no good ground of dependence that we shall live till then. We see that deaths as sudden as our dying before to-morrow morning, are common in the world. We very often see or hear of sudden deaths. How many suddenly in a few minutes, pass from a state of health to a state of death, in the day-time, by several kinds of disease, which give no warning of their approach, and by many unforeseen accidents! How many go to sleep, in health, and are found dead in their beds in the morning! So that our present health is no good ground of dependence that we shall live to see another day.—That persons are now in youth, is no good ground of dependence upon another day; for sudden unexpected deaths are common even among those who are in the bloom of youth. Nor is it any ground of dependence in this case, that a man is of a more than ordinary healthy and strong constitution. It is found by experience, that such are liable to sudden death as well as others: Job. xxi. 23. "One dieth in his full strength. His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow."

That persons have already lived to see a great many days, and that after they had been often in times past told, that they were uncertain of any future time; or that persons have a strong desire to live longer: or that they are now very unprepared for death, both on temporal and spiritual accounts; is no ground of dependence on the future. Death tarries for no man, but comes when and to whom he is sent, and strikes the deadly blow, whether the man be prepared or not. That men have been very useful in their day, and that it is of great importance to their families and neighbours that they should live longer, is no ground of dependence. The most useful men are often cut down by death, in the midst of their usefulness. The same may be said, though we cannot see which way death should come at us before to-morrow. To how many accidents, to how many diseases are we liable, which may prove fatal before to-morrow, which yet it is impossible for us to foresee! So, if we be very careful of our lives, and our health, not to expose ourselves to any dangers, still this is no ground of dependence as to any future time. Death comes in many ways which were not thought of. Men foresee not the means of their death, any more than the fish securely swimming in the water foresee the net, or the bird that securely feeds upon the bait sees the snare. It is as the wise man observes, in Eccles. ix. 12. "For man also knoweth

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not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them."

SECT. V.

Serious Inquiries.

I SHALL improve this doctrine, by putting you upon examining yourselves, whether you do not boast yourselves of to-morrow, or whether you do not live in such a manner as you would not, were it not that you depend on future time and future opportunity in the world. Would not your behaviour be very different from what it now is, if you every day lived and acted without any dependence on seeing one day more?—You cannot but acknowledge it to be most reasonable, that you should live and act thus. You cannot but own, that you have no good ground of dependence on another day; and therefore that you cannot act wisely any otherwise than in acting as one who hath no dependence on any such thing. Therefore inquire whether you act wisely and reasonably in this respect.

1. Do you not set your hearts much more on this world, than you would, if you had no dependence on the morrow? Is not the language of the rich man in the gospel, the secret language of your hearts? "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years," &c. Is not this the language of your hearts, with respect to what you have gotten already; which makes you place your happiness so much in it? And with respect to what of the world you are seeking and pursuing, is it not with a dependence on enjoying it for a great while, when you shall have obtained it? Are not your lands and other possessions which you have gotten, or are about to get, in your own imagination, yours for a great while? Would your mind be so filled with thoughts and cares about these things, so much to the exclusion of another world? Would you lay yourselves under so great disadvantages for your soul's good, by involving yourselves in worldly cares; if you had no dependence on having any thing to do with these things for more than the present day? If you did not depend on considerable more time in the world, would your inquiry be so much, What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed? and so little, How shall we make our calling and election sure; how shall we be assured that we are upon a good foundation for another world, and that we are in such a state, that death cannot hurt us? How

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shall we be sure that we are ready to appear before the judgment-seat of an heart-searching God? Would there be so much of your time spent in laying up treasure on earth—and so little in laying up treasure in heaven, that you might have store against the day of death—were it not that you put death at a distance? Would you be so much raised at your temporal prosperity, and so much sunk when you meet with crosses and disappointments in your worldly affairs, if you did not think that continuance in the world is to be depended on for more days than the present?—Let those who very much affect to adorn their bodies in gaudy apparel, inquire whether they would think it worth their while to spend so much time to make themselves fine, and to set themselves forth as gayer than others, if they really had no dependence that their bodies would be preserved one day longer from being clasped in the cold arms of death?

2. Inquire whether you would not much less meddle with the concerns of others, and be much more employed with your own hearts, if each day you had no dependence on living another day. If you were sensible that you had no other day to depend upon than this, you would be sensible that you had great affairs of your own to attend to. You would find a great deal of business at home between God and your own soul; and considering that you cannot depend on another day, it would seem to you that you have but a short time in which to do it, and that therefore you have need to be much engaged. You would say as Christ did, I must work while the day lasts, for the night cometh, wherein no man can work. You would find so much to be done, and so much difficulty in doing it, that you would have little leisure, and little heart to intermeddle with the business of others. Your business would be confined to a much narrower compass. You would have so much to do at home in your closets, and with your own hearts, that you would find no occasion to go abroad for intermeddling business to fill up your time.

But the truth is, men conceive of a great deal of time which they have to be filled up, and hence they want business: they depend on to-morrow, and the day following, and next month, and next year, yea many years to come. When they are young they depend on living to be middle-aged, and when middle-aged they depend on old age, and always put far away the day of death. Let them be young or old, there always seems to them to be a great vacancy between them and death; hence they wander to and fro for business to fill up that vacancy.—Whereas if they were sensible of the uncertainty of life, they would, in the first place, make sure of their own business; the business of their own precious, immortal souls would be done, before they would attend much

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to the business of other people. They would have no desire or disposition to concern themselves with every private quarrel which breaks out in the neighbourhood. They would not think it much concerned them to inquire into the matter, and to pass their censure on the affair. They would find something else to do, than to set by the hour together, discussing, and censuring the conduct of such and such persons, gathering up or rehearsing the stories which are carried about to the disadvantage of this and that person.

We seldom, if ever, see men who are upon sick-beds, and look upon themselves very dangerously sick, disposed to spend their time in this manner; and the reason is, that they look upon it doubtful, whether they shall live long. They do not so much as others, depend on much time to spare; hence their minds are taken up more about their own souls' concerns, than about the concerns of others. So it would be with persons in health, if their health did not make them depend on a great deal of time in the world.

3. If you each day depend on no other but the present, would you not engage and interest yourselves much less in party designs and schemes, than you are now wont to do? Among a people divided into two parties, as this town hath been for a long time, there is commonly much done by the partizans in forming schemes of opposition to one another. There is always a strife, who shall get their wills and carry their point. This often engages them, if not in open quarrels, in secret intrigues. That there is so much done in these things, is a certain evidence that they boast themselves of to-morrow, and put death at a distance.

Men would certainly find themselves very much indisposed to such things, if they were so sensible of the uncertainty of life, as to depend on no other day than the present. It is therefore very proper, that you should examine yourselves in this particular, at this time. If you really depended on no other day than the present, would your hearts be so much engaged in strife between two parties, as they often are? Would your spirits be so often raised and ruffled? Would you go about with so much prejudice against such and such men: harbouring so much of the old leaven, which so often breaks out in heats of spirit; and, as an old sore which was skinned over, but not cured, sets to raging, with a touch, which would not have hurt sound flesh?—Commonly in the management of a strife between two parties, there is a great deal of envy. When any who belong to one of the parties seem to prosper, the other party will envy them; it is a grievous thing to them. So there is also much contempt; when one of the parties gets the ascendant a little over the other, they are ready to make the utmost improvement of it, and to insult the

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other party.—And there is commonly in such cases a great deal of mutual secret reproach. When those of one party get together, then is the time to inveigh against those of the other party, and to set forth their injustice and their fraudulent practices. Then is the time for them to pass their censure on their words and actions. Then is the time to expose their own surmises and suspicions of what the other party intends, what it aims at in such and such things, what the purposes of individuals are, and what they suppose their secret actions are.—Then is the time for all that are friends in the cause, and engaged in the same designs, to entertain one another by ridiculing the words and actions of the other party, and to make themselves sport of their folly and disappointments; and much is done at calling one another *Rǎca* and *fools*, or other names equivalent, if not much more than equivalent. Then is the time to lay their heads together, to plot and contrive how they shall manage such an affair so as to disappoint the other party, and obtain their own wills.

Brethren, these things ought not so to be among a Christian people; especially among a people that has made the profession which we have made. Nor would they be so if it were not for your dependence on much future time in the world. If you were so sensible of your continual liableness to death, that every day was the last you depended upon, these things certainly would not be so. For let us but consider what are the effects of death with respect to such things. It puts an end to party-quarrels. Many men hold these quarrels as long as they live. They begin young, and hold on through many great and sore afflictions and chastisements of Providence. The old sore remains, when the supporters of nature bow, and the eyes grow dim, and the hands tremble with age. But death, when that comes, puts an end to all their quarrelling in this world. Death silences the most clamorous, and censorious, and backbiting tongue. When men are dead, they cease to lay schemes against those of another party; death dashes all their schemes, so far as they have any concern in them. Psal. cxlvi. 4. "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."

When men are dead, they cease to bite and devour others; as it is said to have been of old a proverb among the Egyptians, *Dead men do not bite*. There are many who will bite and devour as long as they live, but death tames them. Men could not be quiet or safe by them while alive, but none will be afraid of them when dead. The bodies of those that made such a noise and tumult when alive, when dead, lie as quietly among the graves of their neighbours as any others. Their enemies, of whom they strove to get their

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wills while alive, get their wills of them when they are dead. Nothing can please their enemies better than to have them out of their way. It suits them, that those who were so troublesome to them, are locked up safe in the close grave, where they will no more stand in their way.—There are no more effects of their pride, their craftiness, their hatred, and envy. Eccles. ix. 6. "Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished."

The time will soon come, when you who have for many years been at times warmly contending one with another, will be very peaceable as to this world. Your dead bodies will probably lie quietly together in the same burying-place. If you do not leave off contending before death, how natural will it be for others to have such thoughts as these, when they see your corpses: What! is this the man who used to be so busy in carrying on the designs of his party? Oh, now, he has done; now he hath no more any part in any of these things; now it doth not at all concern him, who get their wills, or what party is uppermost. We shall hear his voice no more in our *town meetings*. He will not sit any more to reproach and laugh at others. He is gone to appear before his Judge, and to receive according to his conduct in life.—The consideration of such things as these would certainly have a mighty effect among us, if we did not put far away the day of death. If all acted every day as not depending on any other day, we should be a peaceable, quiet people.

4. Inquire, whether or no you do not allow yourselves in some things, and endeavour to flatter yourselves that there is no evil in them, which you would by no means care to do if you had not a dependence on living till to-morrow. It is very common among men, when they are strongly enticed to some sinful practice, by their worldly interest, or by their carnal appetites, to pretend that they do not think there is any evil in it; when indeed they know better. Their pretence is only to serve a present turn. And if they expected to have their souls required of them that night, they would by no means dare to persist in the practice. Therefore examine the liberties you take by this test. What would you think of them, if you now should have the following news sent you by some messenger from heaven: John, or Thomas, (or whatever your name be,) this night shall thy soul be required of thee. How would such tidings strike you! How would they alter the face of things! Doubtless your thoughts would be very quick; you would soon begin to reflect on yourselves, and to examine your past and present conduct. And in what colours would the liberties you now take, appear to you in the case now supposed? Would you then conclude, that

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there is no evil in them? Would you not be less bold to go forward and meet death, for having continued in such practices? Would you dare to commit such acts again before you die, which now you pretend are lawful? Would not the few hours which you would have to live, be at all the more uncomfortable to you for having done such things? Would you not presently wish that you had let them alone? Yea, would they not appear frightful and terrifying to you? If it be thus, it is a sign that the reason why you now allow yourselves in them, and plead for their lawfulness, is, that you put death at a distance, and depend on many other days in the world.

5. Inquire, whether you do not some things on the presumption, that you shall hereafter repent of them. Is not this the very thing which causes you to dare to do some things? Is it not the very ground on which you venture to gratify your lusts? Let young people examine all their secret carriage; what they do alone in the dark and in secret corners. God knoweth, and your own hearts know, though men do not. Put the question impartially to your own consciences; is not this the very thing that gives you courage, that God is very merciful, and that he often of his sovereign mercy gives repentance of great sins, and even wilful sins, and in consequence of repentance forgives? And so you hope, that one day or other he will do so to you. You intend some time hereafter earnestly to seek; and you hope you shall be awakened. And if you be very earnest, as you intend to be, you hope you shall be converted, and then you shall be forgiven, and it will be as well as if you had never committed such sins.

If this be the case, consider how you boast of to-morrow, and foolishly depend on future opportunity to repent, as well as foolishly presume on the mercy of God to give you repentance at the same time that you take a course to provoke God, for ever to give you up to a sealed hardness and blindness, and to a most fearful damnation; not considering that God will glorify his revenging justice, as well as his mercy; nor remembering the sad example of Esau, "who for a morsel of meat sold his birth-right; and afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." Heb. xii. 16, 17.

6. Inquire, whether you improve this day as one who doth not depend upon ever having opportunity to keep another Sabbath, or to hear or read another discourse. It appears, from what hath been already said, that you have no grounds to depend on any more such opportunities. Now the day is present, and so you are in the better capacity to determine how it is with you. It is but for you to reflect

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upon yourselves, to look inward, and see how it is with you at this present time. And how is it? Are you as strict and as diligent in keeping this Sabbath, watching your thoughts, keeping your hearts, striving in duties both public and private, and improving ordinances, as might be expected of one who hath no dependence on ever enjoying such an opportunity any more; one who doth not depend on ever setting foot again within the walls of God's house? Do you attend to this address with that care, and desire, and endeavour to improve it for your good, as you would, if you did not depend upon it, that your bodies would not be in the grave, and your souls fixed in eternity, in their unalterable state, before the next Sabbath?

7. Are you careful to see to it that the grounds of your hope are good? A man who hath some hope of being in a state of acceptance with God, but is not sure, if he had no dependence on any other day's opportunity of making it sure, would be very strict in examining himself, and searching the grounds of his hope, and would not rest in an uncertainty. He would be very thorough in informing himself what might be depended on as good evidence of an interest in Christ, and what not; and would be exceedingly strict in searching his own heart, to see whether there was any thing in him that comes up to the requisites laid down in the scriptures.—If what appears hopeful in him were dim and obscure, he would set himself very earnestly to obtain that which would be more clear and manifest, and would cry earnestly to God for it, and would apply himself to a diligent use of means in order to it. And good reason why; for he depends on no other opportunity to make his calling and election sure, than what he hath to-day. Inquire, therefore, whether you be thus thorough in examining your hope. And are you thus careful effectually to see to it, that you are on a sure foundation? If not, then you behave yourselves as those that depend on to-morrow.

SECT. VI.

How to spend every day.

God hath concealed from us the day of our death, without doubt, partly for this end, that we might be excited to be always ready, and might live as those that are always waiting for the coming of their Lord, agreeably to the counsel which Christ gives us, Matt. xxiv. 42, 43, 44; xxv. 13; and, Mark xiii. 32, &c. That watchman is not faithful, who, being set to defend a house from thieves, or a city from an enemy at hand, will at any hour venture to sleep, trusting that the

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thief or the enemy will not come. Therefore it is expected of the watchman, that he behave himself every hour of the night, as one who doth not depend upon it that the enemy will tarry until the next hour. Now, therefore, let me, in Christ's name, renew the call and counsel of Jesus Christ to you, to watch as those that know not what hour your Lord will come. Let me call upon you who are hitherto in an unrenewed condition. Depend not upon it, that you will not be in hell before to-morrow morning. You have no reason for any such dependence; God hath not promised to keep you from it, or to withhold his wrath so long.

How can you reasonably be easy or quiet for one day, or one night, in such a condition, when you know not but your Lord will come this night? And if you should then be found as you now are, unregenerate, how unprepared would you be for his coming, and how fearful would be the consequence! Be exhorted, therefore, for your own sakes, immediately to awake from the sleep of sin, out of sleep, and sleep no more, as not depending on any other day.—Let me exhort you to have no dependence on any future time; to keep every Sabbath, and to hear every sermon, as if it were the last. And when you go into your closet, and address yourself to your Father who seeth in secret, do it in no dependence on any future opportunity to perform the same duty. When you that are young go into company for amusement and diversion, consider that it may be the *last* opportunity of the like nature that ever you may have. In all your dealings with your neighbours, act as if you were never to make another bargain. Behave in your families every day, as though you depended on no other.—Here I shall offer you two motives.

1. Consider, if you will hearken to this counsel, how much it will tend to your safety and peace in life and death. It is the way really and truly to be ready for death; yea, to be fit to live or fit to die; to be ready for affliction and adversity, and for whatever God in his providence shall bring upon you. It is the way to be in, not only an habitual, but actual preparedness for all changes, and particularly for your last change.—It is the way to possess your souls in a serene and undisturbed peace, and to enable you to go on with an immoveable fortitude of soul, to meet the most frightful changes, to encounter the most formidable enemies, and to be ready with unshaken confidence to triumph over death whenever you meet him; to have your hearts fixed, trusting in God, as one that stands on a firm foundation, and hath for his habitation the munition of rocks, that is not afraid of evil tidings, but laughs at the fear of the enemy. It will be the way for you to possess that quietness and assurance spoken of, Isa.

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xxxii. 17. "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever." —The servant who always stands watching, will not be at all surprised at the news that his Lord is coming. This will be the way for you to live above the fear of death. Yea, if heaven and earth should shake, you may stand firm and unshaken, being settled on a rock, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. O how happy are such persons, who have such safety and peace! What a blessed peace is that which arises from such a constant preparation for death! How happy therefore is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing!

2. What dismal calamities and miseries mankind are subject to for want of this, for want of behaving themselves every day, as not depending on any future day! The way of the world is, one day foolishly to depend on another, yea, on many others. And what is the consequence? Why, the consequence with respect to the greater part of the world is, that they live all their days without any true peace or rest of soul. They are all their lifetime subject to bondage through fear of death. And when death sensibly approaches, they are put into a terrible fright. They have a dismal view of their past lives; the ill improvement of their time, and the sins they have been guilty of, stand staring them in the face, and are more frightful to them than so many devils. And when they look forward into that eternity whither they are going, how dismal is the prospect! O how do their hearts shrink at the thought of it! They go before the judgment-seat of God, as those that are dragged thither, while they would gladly, if they could, hide themselves in the caves and dens of the earth.

And what is worse yet than all the disquietude and terror of conscience in this world; the consequence of a contrary behaviour, with respect to the bulk of mankind, is their eternal perdition. They flatter themselves, that they shall see another day, and then another, and trust to that, until finally most of them are swallowed up in hell, to lament their folly to all eternity, in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.—Consider how it was with all the foolish virgins who trusted to the delay of the bridegroom's coming; when he came they were surprised, and found unprepared, having no oil in their lamps; and while they went to buy, those who were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut against them, and they came afterwards crying in vain, *Lord, Lord, open to us.*

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SERMON VII.

THE CHRISTIAN PILGRIM;

OR,

THE TRUE CHRISTIAN's LIFE A JOURNEY TOWARDS HEAVEN.

HEB. XI. 13, 14.

And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country.

THE Apostle is here setting forth the excellencies of the grace of faith, by the glorious effects and happy issue of it in the saints of the Old Testament. He had spoken in the preceding part of the chapter particularly, of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Jacob. Having enumerated those instances, he takes notice that "these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers," &c.—In these words the apostle seems to have a more particular respect to Abraham and Sarah, and their kindred, who came with them from Haran, and from Ur of the Chaldees, as appears by the 15th verse, where the apostle says, "and truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned."

Two things may be observed here:

1. What these saints confessed of themselves, viz. *that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*—Thus we have a particular account concerning Abraham, "I am a stranger and a sojourner with you."* And it seems to have been the

* Gen. xxiii. 4.

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general sense of the patriarchs, by what Jacob says to Pharaoh. "And Jacob said to Pharaoh, the days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."* "I am a stranger and a sojourner with thee, as all my fathers were."†

2. The inference that the apostle draws from hence, viz. *that they sought another country as their home.* "For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country." In confessing that they were strangers, they plainly declared that this is not their country; that this is not the place where they are at home. And in confessing themselves to be pilgrims, they declared plainly that this is not their settled abode; but that they have respect to some other country, which they seek, and to which they are travelling.

SECT. I.

That this life ought to be so spent by us, as to be only a journey, or pilgrimage, towards heaven.

HERE I would observe,

1. That we ought not to rest in the world and its enjoyments, but should desire heaven. We should *seek first the kingdom of God.*‡ We ought above all things to desire a heavenly happiness; to be with God; and dwell with Jesus Christ. Though surrounded with outward enjoyments, and settled in families with desirable friends and relations; though we have companions whose society is delightful, and children in whom we see many promising qualifications; though we live by good neighbours, and are generally beloved where known; yet we ought not to take our rest in these things as our portion. We should be so far from resting in them, that we should desire to leave them all, in God's due time. We ought to possess, enjoy, and use them, with no other view but readily to quit them, whenever we are called to it, and to change them willingly and cheerfully for heaven.

A traveller is not wont to rest in what he meets with, however comfortable and pleasing on the road. If he passes through pleasant places, flowery meadows, or shady groves; he does not take up his content in these things, but only takes a transient view of them as he goes along. He is not enticed by fine appearances to put off the thought of proceeding. No, but his journey's end is in his mind. If he meets with

* Gen. xlvii. 9. † Psal. xxxix. 12. ‡ Matt. vi. 33.

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comfortable accommodations at an inn; he entertains no thoughts of settling there. He considers that these things are not his own, that he is but a stranger, and when he has refreshed himself, or tarried for a night, he is for going forward. And it is pleasant to him to think that so much of the way is gone.

So should we desire heaven more than the comforts and enjoyments of this life. The apostle mentions it as an encouraging, comfortable consideration to Christians, that they draw nearer their happiness. "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."—Our hearts ought to be loose to these things, as that of a man on a journey; that we may as cheerfully part with them whenever God calls. "But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away."*—These things, as only lent to us for a little while, to serve a present turn; but we should set our *hearts* on heaven, as our inheritance for ever.

2. We ought to seek heaven, by travelling in the way that leads thither. This is a way of holiness. We should choose and desire to travel thither in this way and in no other; and part with all those carnal appetites which, as weights, will tend to hinder us. "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."† However pleasant the gratification of any appetite may be, we must lay it aside, if it be any hindrance, or a stumbling-block in the way to heaven.

We should travel on in the way of obedience to all God's commands, even the difficult as well as the easy; denying all our sinful inclinations and interests. The way to heaven is ascending; we must be content to travel up hill, though it be hard and tiresome, and contrary to the natural bias of our flesh. We should follow Christ; the path he travelled, was the right way to heaven. We should take up our cross and follow him, in meekness and lowliness of heart, obedience and charity, diligence to do good, and patience under afflictions. The way to heaven is a heavenly life; an imitation of those who are in heaven, in their holy enjoyments, loving, adoring, serving, and praising God and the Lamb. Even if we *could* go to heaven with the gratification of our lusts, we should prefer a way of holiness and conformity to the spiritual self-denying rules of the gospel.

* 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30. † Heb. xii. 1.

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3. We should travel on in this way in a laborious manner. —Long journeys are attended with toil and fatigue; especially if through a wilderness. Persons in such a case expect no other than to suffer hardships and weariness.—So we should travel in this way of holiness, improving our time and strength, to surmount the difficulties and obstacles that are in the way. The land we have to travel through, is a wilderness; there are many mountains, rocks, and rough places that we must go over, and therefore there is a necessity that we should lay out our strength.

4. Our whole lives ought to be spent in travelling this road.—We ought to begin *early*. This should be the *first* concern, when persons become capable of acting. When they first set out in the *world*, they should set out on *this* journey.—And we ought to travel on with *assiduity*. It ought to be the work of every day. We should often think of our journey's end; and make it our daily work to travel on in the way that leads to it.—He who is on a journey, is often thinking of the destined place; and it is his daily care and business to get along; and to improve his time to get towards his journey's end. Thus should heaven be continually in our thoughts; and the immediate entrance or passage to it, *viz.* death, should be present with us.—We ought to *persevere* in this way as long as we live.

"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us."* Though the road be difficult, and toilsome, we must hold out with patience, and be content to endure hardships. Though the journey be long, yet we must not stop short; but hold on till we arrive at the place we seek. Nor should we be discouraged with the length and difficulties of the way, as the children of Israel were, and be for turning back again. All our thought and design should be to press forward till we arrive.

5. We ought to be continually growing in holiness; and in that respect coming nearer and nearer to heaven.—We should be endeavouring to come nearer to heaven, in being more heavenly; becoming more and more like the inhabitants of heaven, in respect of holiness and conformity to God; the knowledge of God and Christ; in clear views of the glory of God, the beauty of Christ, and the excellency of divine things, as we come nearer to the beatific vision.—We should labour to be continually growing in divine love—that this may be an increasing flame in our hearts, till they ascend wholly in this flame—in obedience and an heavenly conversation; that we may do the will of God on earth as the angels do in heaven: in comfort and spiritual joy; in sensible communion

* Heb. xii. 1.

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with God and Jesus Christ. Our path should be as "the shining light, that shines more and more to the perfect day."* We ought to be hungering and thirsting after righteousness; after an increase in righteousness. "As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."† The perfection of heaven should be our mark. "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."‡

6. All other concerns of life ought to be entirely subordinate to this.—When a man is on a journey, all the steps he takes are subordinated to the aim of getting to his journey's end. And if he carries money or provisions with him, it is to supply him in his journey. So we ought wholly to subordinate all our other business, and all our temporal enjoyments, to this affair of travelling to heaven. When any thing we have, becomes a clog and hindrance to us, we should quit it immediately. The use of our worldly enjoyments and possessions, should be with such a view, and in such a manner, as to further us in our way heaven-ward. Thus we should eat, and drink, and clothe ourselves, and improve the conversation and enjoyment of friends. And whatever business we are setting about, whatever design we are engaging in, we should enquire with ourselves, whether this business or undertaking will forward us in our way to heaven? And if not, we should quit our design.

SECT. II.

Why the Christian's life is a journey or pilgrimage?

1. This world is not our abiding place. Our continuance here is but very short. Man's days on the earth, are as a shadow. It was never designed by God that this world should be our home. Neither did God give us these temporal accommodations for that end. If God has given us ample estates, and children or other pleasant friends, it is with no such design, that we should be furnished here, as for a settled abode; but with a design that we should use them for the present, and then leave them in a very little time. When we are called to any secular business, or charged with the care of a family, if we improve our lives to any other purpose, than as a journey toward heaven, all our labour will be lost. If we spend our lives in the pursuit of a temporal happiness;

* Prov. iv. 18. † 1 Pet. ii. 2. ‡ Phil. iii. 13, 14.

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as riches or sensual pleasures; credit and esteem from men; delight in our children, and the prospect of seeing them well brought up, and well settled, &c.——All these things will be of little significancy to us. Death will blow up all our hopes, and will put an end to these enjoyments. "The places that have known us, will know us no more:" and "the eye that has seen us, shall see us no more." We must be taken away for ever from all these things: and it is uncertain when: it may be soon after we are put into the possession of them. And then, where will be all our worldly employments and enjoyments, when we are laid in the silent grave! "So man lieth down and riseth not again, till the heavens be no more."*

2. The future world was designed to be our settled and everlasting abode. There it was intended that we should be fixed; and there alone is a lasting habitation, and a lasting inheritance. The present state is short and transitory; but our state in the other world, is everlasting. And as we are there at first, so we must be without change. Our state in the future world, therefore, being eternal, is of so much greater importance than our state here, that all our concerns in this world should be wholly subordinated to it.

3. Heaven is that place alone where our highest end, and highest good is to be obtained. God hath made us for himself. "Of him, and through him, and to him are all things." Therefore, then do we attain to our highest end, when we are brought to God: but that is by being brought to heaven; for that is God's throne, the place of his special presence. There is but a very imperfect union with God to be had in this world, a very imperfect knowledge of him in the midst of much darkness; a very imperfect conformity to God, mingled with abundance of estrangement. Here we can serve and glorify God, but in a very imperfect manner; our service being mingled with sin, which dishonours God.—But when we get to heaven, (if ever that be,) we shall be brought to a perfect union with God, and have more clear views of him. There we shall be fully conformed to God, without any remaining sin; for "we shall see him as he is." There we shall serve God perfectly; and glorify him in an exalted manner, even to the utmost of the powers and capacity of our nature. Then we shall perfectly give up ourselves to God; our hearts will be pure and holy offerings, presented in a flame of divine love.

God is the highest good of the reasonable creature; and the enjoyment of him is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied.—To go to heaven fully to enjoy God, is *infinitely* better than the most pleasant accommodations here.

* Job xiv. 12.

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Fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, or children, or the company of earthly friends, are but shadows; but the enjoyment of God is the substance. These are but scattered beams; but God is the sun. These are but streams; but God is the fountain. These are but drops; but God is the ocean.—Therefore it becomes us to spend this life only as a journey towards heaven, as it becomes us to make the seeking of our highest end and proper good, the whole work of our lives; to which we should subordinate all other concerns of life. Why should we labour for, or set our hearts on any thing else, but that which is our proper end, and true happiness?

4. Our present state, and all that belongs to it, is designed by him that made all things, to be wholly in order to another world.—This world was made for a place of preparation for another. Man's mortal life was given him, that he might be prepared for his fixed state. And all that God has here given us, is given to this purpose. The sun shines, and the rain falls upon us; and the earth yields her increase to us for this end. Civil, ecclesiastical, and family affairs, and all our personal concerns, are designed and ordered in subordination to a future world, by the maker and disposer of all things. To this therefore they ought to be subordinated by us.

SECT. III.

Instruction afforded by the consideration, that life is a journey, or pilgrimage, towards heaven.

1. This doctrine may teach us moderation in our mourning for the loss of such dear friends, who, while they lived, improved their lives to right purposes. If they lived a holy life, then their lives were a journey towards heaven. And why should we be immoderate in mourning, when they are got to their journey's end? Death, though it appears to us with a frightful aspect, is to them a great blessing. Their end is happy, and better than their beginning. "*The day of their death, is better to them than the day of their birth.*"* While they lived, they desired heaven, and chose it above this world, or any of its enjoyments. For this they earnestly longed, and why should we grieve that they have obtained it?—Now they have got to their Father's house. They find more comfort a thousand times, now they are got home, than they did in their journey. In this world they underwent much labour and toil; it was a wilderness they passed through. There were many difficulties in the way; mountains and rough places.

* Eccles. vii. 1.

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It was laborious and fatiguing to travel the road; and they had many wearisome days and nights: but now they have got to their everlasting rest. "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."* They look back upon the difficulties, and sorrows, and dangers of life, rejoicing that they have surmounted them all.

We are ready to look upon death as their calamity, and to mourn, that those who were so dear to us, should be in the dark grave; that they are there transformed to corruption and worms; taken away from their dear children and enjoyments, &c. as though they were in awful circumstances. But this is owing to our infirmity; they are in a happy condition, inconceivably blessed. They do not mourn, but rejoice with exceeding joy: their mouths are filled with joyful songs, and they drink at rivers of pleasure. They find no mixture of grief, that they have changed their earthly enjoyments, and the company of mortals, for heaven. Their life here, though in the best circumstances, was attended with much that was adverse and afflictive: but now there is an end to all adversity. "They shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."†

It is true, we shall see them no more in this world, yet we ought to consider that we are travelling towards the same place; and why should we break our hearts that they have got there before us? We are following after them, and hope, as soon as we get to our journey's end, to be with them again, in better circumstances. A degree of mourning for near relations when departed is not inconsistent with Christianity, but very agreeable to it; for as long as we are flesh and blood, we have animal propensities and affections. But we have just reason that our mourning should be mingled with joy. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others that have no hope:"‡ (*i. e.*) that they should not sorrow as the Heathen, who had no knowledge of a future happiness. This appears by the following verse; "*for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.*"

2. If our lives ought to be only a journey towards heaven;

* Rev. xiv. 13. † Rev. vii. 16, 17. ‡ 1 Thess. iv. 13.

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how ill do they improve their lives, that spend them in travelling towards hell?—Some men spend their whole lives, from their infancy to their dying day, in going down the broad way to destruction. They not only draw nearer to hell as to time, but they every day grow more ripe for destruction; they are more assimilated to the inhabitants of the infernal world. While others press forward in the straight and narrow way to life, and laboriously travel up the hill toward Zion, against the inclinations and tendency of the flesh; these run with a swift career down to eternal death. This is the employment of every day, with all wicked men; and the whole day is spent in it. As soon as ever they awake in the morning, they set out anew in the way to hell, and spend every waking moment in it. They begin in early days. "The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies."* They hold on it with perseverance. Many of them who live to be old, are never weary in it; though they live to be an hundred years old, they will not cease travelling in the way to hell, till they arrive there. And all the concerns of life are subordinated to this employment. A wicked man is a servant of sin; his powers and faculties are employed in the service of sin, and in fitness for hell. And all his possessions are so used by him as to be subservient to the same purpose. Men spend their time in treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath. Thus do all unclean persons, who live in lascivious practices in secret; all malicious persons; all profane persons, that neglect the duties of religion. Thus do all unjust persons; and those who are fraudulent and oppressive in their dealings. Thus do all backbiters and revilers; all covetous persons, that set their hearts chiefly on the riches of this world. Thus do tavern-haunters, and frequenters of evil company; and many other kinds that might be mentioned. Thus the bulk of mankind are hastening onward in the broad way to destruction; which is, as it were, filled up with the multitude that are going in it with one accord. And they are every day going into hell out of this broad way by thousands. Multitudes are continually flowing down into the great lake of fire and brimstone, as some mighty river constantly disembogues its water into the ocean.

3. Hence when persons are converted, they do but begin their work, and set out in the way they have to go.—They never till then do any thing at that work in which their whole lives ought to be spent. Persons before conversion never take a step that way. Then does a man first set out on his journey, when he is brought home to Christ; and so far is he from

* Psalm xlviii. 4.

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having done his work, that his care and labour in his Christian work and business, is then but begun, in which he must spend the remaining part of his life.

Those persons do ill, who when they are converted, and have obtained a hope of their being in a good condition, do not strive as earnestly as they did before, while they were under awakenings. They ought, henceforward, as long as they live, to be as earnest and laborious, as watchful and careful as ever; yea, they should increase more and more. It is no just excuse, that now they have obtained conversion. Should not we be as diligent that we may serve and glorify God, as that we ourselves may be happy? And if we have obtained grace, yet we ought to strive as much that we may obtain the other degrees that are before, as we did to obtain that small degree that is behind. The apostle tells us, that he forgot what was behind, and reached forth towards what was before.*

Yea, those who are converted, have now a further reason to strive for grace; for they have seen something of its excellency. A man who has once tasted the blessings of Canaan, has more reason to press towards it, than he had before. And they who are converted, should strive to "make their calling and election sure." All those who are converted are not sure of it; and those who are sure, do not know that they shall be always so; and still seeking and serving God with the utmost diligence, is the way to have assurance, and to have it maintained.

SECT. IV.

An exhortation, so to spend the present life, that it may only be a journey towards heaven.

LABOUR to obtain such a disposition of mind that you may choose heaven for your inheritance and home; and may earnestly long for it, and be willing to change this world, and all its enjoyments, for heaven. Labour to have your heart taken up so much about heaven, and heavenly enjoyments, as that you may rejoice when God calls you to leave your best earthly friends and comforts for heaven, there to enjoy God and Christ.

Be persuaded to travel in the way that leads to heaven; *viz.* in holiness, self-denial, mortification, obedience to all the commands of God, following Christ's example; in a way of a heavenly life, or imitation of the saints and angels in heaven.

* Phil. iii. 13.

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Let it be your daily work, from morning to night, and hold out in it to the end; let nothing stop or discourage you, or turn you aside from this road. And let all other concerns be subordinated to this. Consider the reasons that have been mentioned why you should thus spend your life; that this world is not your abiding place, that the future world is to be your everlasting abode; and that the enjoyments and concerns of this world, are given entirely in order to another. And consider further for motive,

1. How worthy is heaven that your life should be wholly spent as a journey towards it.—To what better purpose can you spend your life, whether you respect your duty or your interest? What better end can you propose to your journey, than to obtain heaven? You are placed in this world, with a choice given you, that you may travel which way you please; and one way leads to heaven. Now can you direct your course better than this way? All men have some aim or other in living. Some mainly seek worldly things; they spend their days in such pursuits. But is not heaven, where is fulness of joy for ever, much more worthy to be sought by you? How can you better employ your strength, use your means, and spend your days, than in travelling the road that leads to the everlasting enjoyment of God; to his glorious presence; to the new Jerusalem; to the heavenly mount Zion; where all your desires will be filled, and no danger of ever losing your happiness?—No man is at home in this world, whether he choose heaven or not; here he is but a transient person. Where can you choose your home better than in heaven?

2. This is the way to have death comfortable to us.—To spend our lives so as to be only a journeying towards heaven, is the way to be free from bondage, and to have the prospect and forethought of death comfortable. Does the traveller think of his journey's end with fear and terror? Is it terrible to him to think that he has almost got to his journey's end? Were the children of Israel sorry, after forty years' travel in the wilderness, when they had almost got to Canaan? This is the way to be able to part with the world without grief. Does it grieve the traveller, when he has got home, to quit his staff and load of provisions that he had to sustain him by the way?

3. No more of your life will be pleasant to think of when you come to die, than has been spent after this manner.—If you have spent none of your life this way, your whole life will be terrible to you to think of, unless you die under some great delusion. You will see then, that all of your life that has been spent otherwise, is lost. You will then see the vanity of all other aims that you may have proposed to your-

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self. The thought of what you here possessed and enjoyed, will not be pleasant to you, unless you can think also that you have subordinated them to this purpose.

4. Consider that those who are willing thus to spend their lives as a journey towards heaven, may have heaven.—Heaven, however high and glorious, is attainable for such poor worthless creatures as we are. We may attain that glorious region which is the habitation of angels; yea, the dwelling-place of the Son of God; and where is the glorious presence of the great Jehovah. And we may have it freely; without money and without price; if we are but willing to travel the road that leads to it, and bend our course that way as long as we live; we may and shall have heaven for our eternal resting place.

5. Let it be considered, that if our lives be not a journey towards heaven, they will be a journey to hell. All mankind, after they have been here a short while, go to either of the two great receptacles of all that depart out of this world; the one is *heaven;* whither a small number, in comparison, travel; and the other is *hell,* whither the bulk of mankind throng. And one or the other of these must be the issue of our course in this world.

I shall conclude by giving a few *directions:*

1. Labour to get a sense of the vanity of this world; on account of the little satisfaction that is to be enjoyed here: its short continuance, and unserviceableness when we most stand in need of help, *viz.* on a death-bed.—All men, that live any considerable time in the world, might see enough to convince them of its vanity, if they would but consider. —Be persuaded therefore to exercise consideration, when you see and hear, from time to time, of the death of others. Labour to turn your thoughts this way. See the vanity of the world in such a glass.

2. Labour to be much acquainted with heaven.—If you are not acquainted with it, you will not be likely to spend your life as a journey thither. You will not be sensible of its worth, nor will you long for it. Unless you are much conversant in your mind with a better good, it will be exceeding difficult to you to have your hearts loose from these things, and to use them only in subordination to something else, and be ready to part with them for the sake of that better good.—Labour therefore to obtain a realizing sense of a heavenly world, to get a firm belief of its reality, and to be very much conversant with it in your thoughts.

3. Seek heaven only by Jesus Christ.—Christ tells us that he is the way, and the truth, and the life.* He tells us that

* John xiv. 6.

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he is the door of the sheep. "I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved; and go in and out and find pasture."* If we therefore would improve our lives as a journey towards heaven, we must seek it by him, and not by our own righteousness; as expecting to obtain it only for his sake, looking to him, having our dependence on him, who has procured it for us by his merit. And expect strength to walk in holiness, the way that leads to heaven, only from him.

4. Let Christians help one another in going this journey. —There are many ways whereby Christians might greatly forward one another in their way to heaven, as by religious conference, &c. Therefore let them be exhorted to go this journey as it were in company, conversing together, and assisting one another. Company is very desirable in a journey, but in none so much as this.—Let them go united, and not fall out by the way, which would be to hinder one another; but use all means they can to help each other up the hill.—This would ensure a more successful travelling, and a more joyful meeting at their Father's house in glory.

* John x. 9.

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